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OF THE
Good Fairies.
—
BY RONCOLLE
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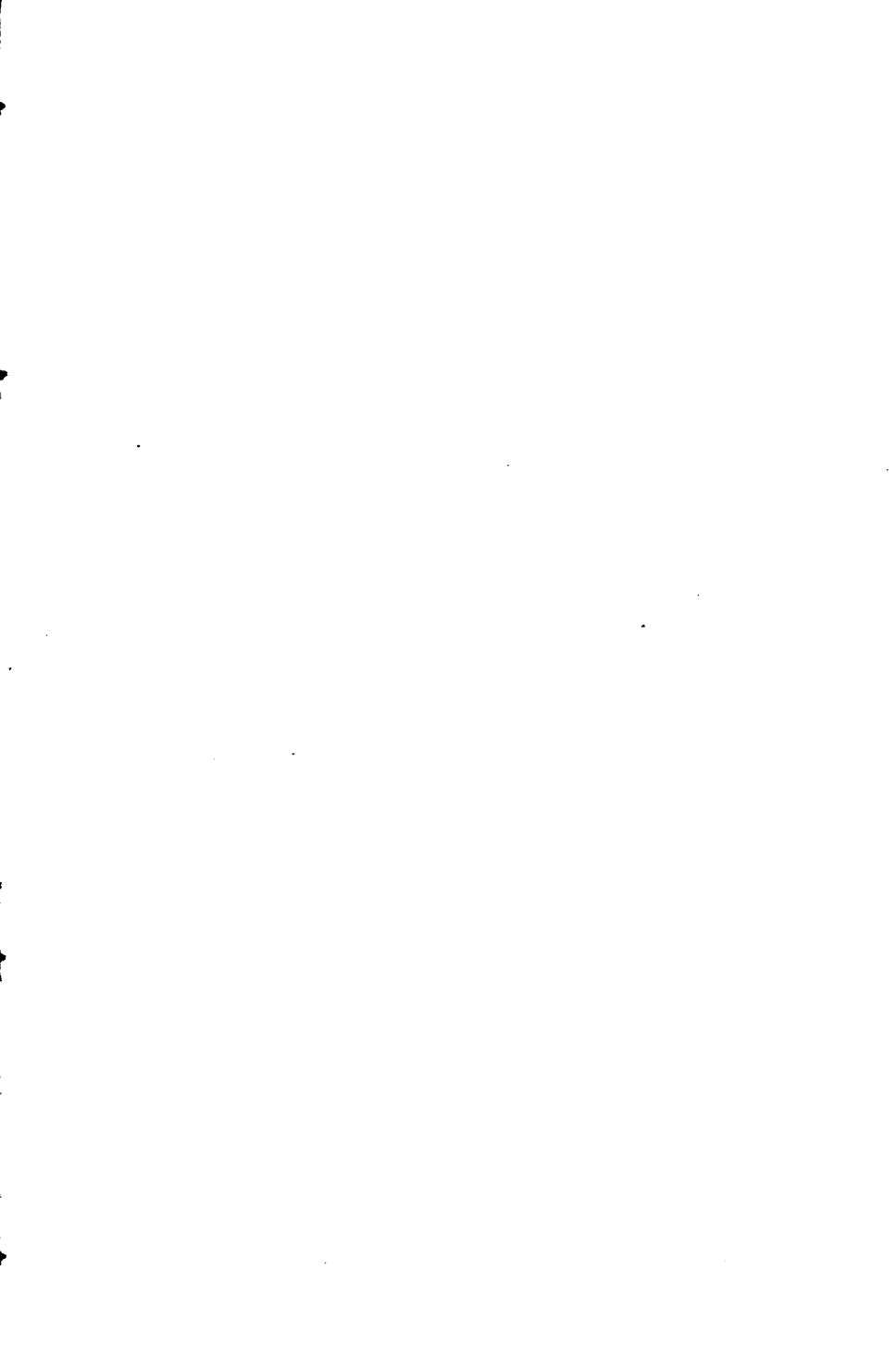
To America's greatest
philanthropist, with the
sincere admiration of its
author.

Adeline Knicker,

Fort Collins, Colo.,
- April 2, 1902.

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Rouelle





The Fairy Queen about to inspire the Author.

THE KINGDOM

OF

THE GOOD FAIRIES.

FAIRY TALES.

By

Adrienne Roucolle.

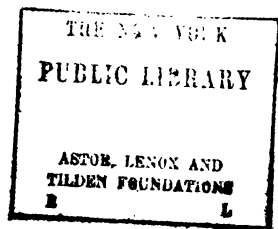


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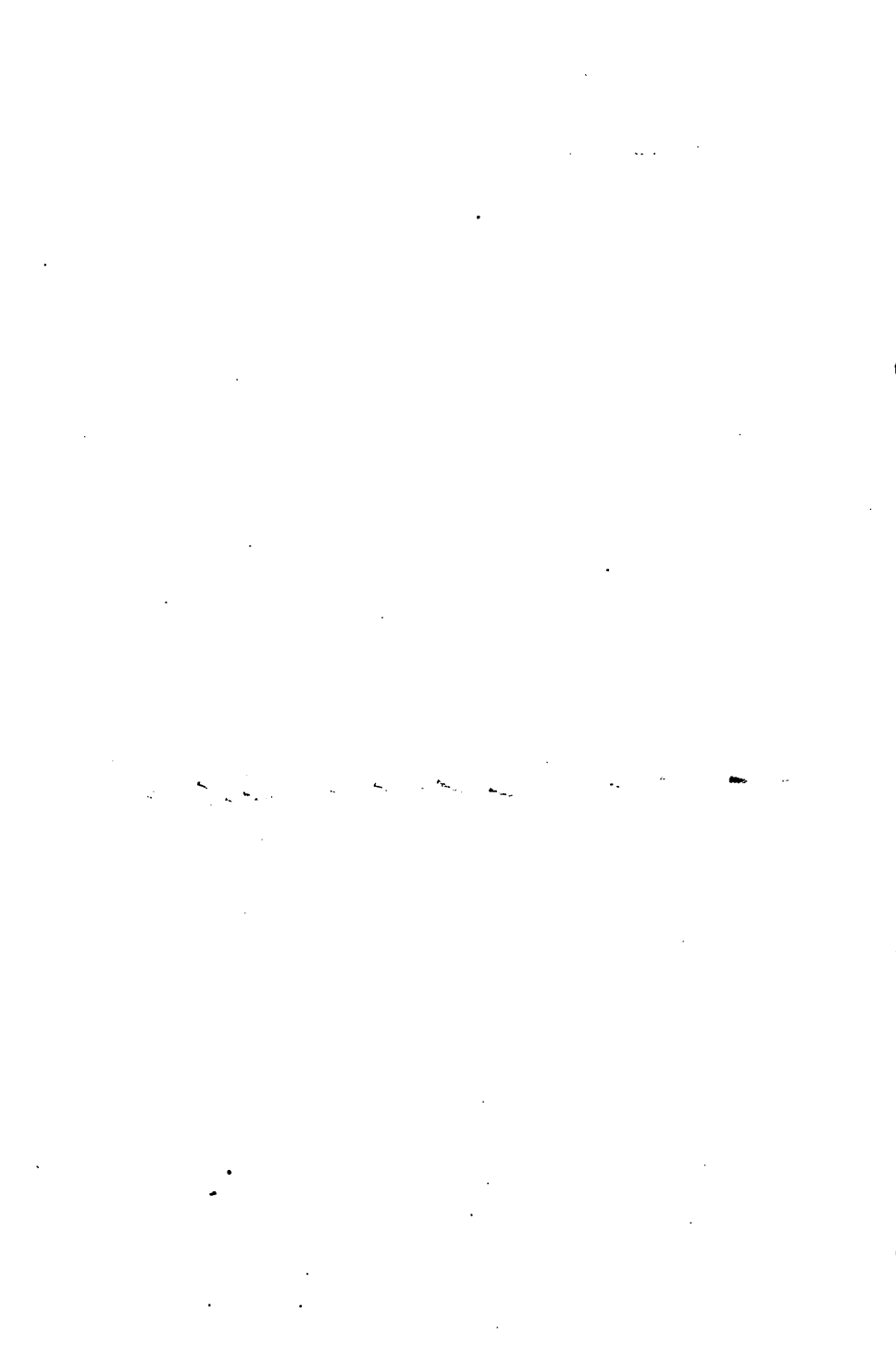
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DEDICATION.



This volume is tenderly dedicated to my sister, Marie Antoinette. The fairy tales it contains were written to relieve the tedious hours of a long convalescence of that little sister. If our young readers find in the reading of the book the same pleasure she experienced, we will be contented.

THE AUTHOR.

THE GOLD LAUREL BRANCH.

PART I.

THE BANQUET.

The last preparations were completed and the palace was ready for the banquet which the Fairy Queen gave to her subjects every year on the first day of Spring. The banquet was to be served in the large reception hall, at the further end of which an orchestra of one million singing birds had been placed, that they might cheer the guests by the soft melody of their songs.

Around the long and heavily-loaded table were arranged the silver chairs on which the fairies were to sit; while in the center, placed on an elevated platform, was the throne for the Queen. It was made of solid gold and was inlaid in quaint designs, worked out in diamonds, pearls and rubies. The dishes were also of gold, while the tiny glasses were of the finest cut crystal. The flowers which hung in garlands from the glass ceilings and walls, and which overflowed from the diamond bowls upon the table, were such as are never seen on earth, where perfection can never be reached.

The orchestra began to sing a light, gay march, and two by two the fairies entered the hall, and after marching up and down several

times with many a graceful turn and winding, they at last divided, and forming two rows between which the Queen was to pass, stood and waited her arrival. They wore that day their most magnificent toilets, and as the sunlight played upon the gems with which they were decked they shone and glittered as though covered with stars.

But now the music became softer and graver, and with slow, majestic footsteps the Fairy Queen appeared, and walking between her bowing subjects took her place on the throne.

Her dress, that day, was the most beautiful she had ever worn. The skirt, with a train that extended several yards behind her, was made of woven moonlight and was covered with a net work of gold, embroidered with flowery designs. The bodice was knitted sunshine, and trimmed with strings of pearls and rubies, that crossed in graceful curves over her bosom. Her crown was composed of seven stars, connected by pieces of rainbow. Her long golden hair which floated from beneath the crown was covered with crystallized dew.

The fairies now took their places around the table and the banquet began. In spite of the mirth of her guests, the Fairy Queen remained thoughtful and sad. Those who noticed this wondered if the Queen was not displeased with some of her subjects. Besides, around the table several of the fairies wore sullen, discontented looks. When the banquet came to an end Fairy Rose, the Queen's favorite, said, as she lifted her tiny glass filled with honey taken from the sweetest flowers:

"Friends and fellow subjects, let us drain our glasses in honor of our great and noble Queen."

All the glasses were drained, and Fairy Rose resumed her seat. The Queen sat looking at those of her subjects who wore displeased looks and she noticed that though they had drunk with the rest, it had simply been not to show to others the jealous anger which raged in their hearts. At this sight, her face became sadder, while now as she rose to express her thanks, there was a pained accent in her tones. But she continued in a sterner voice:

"As is customary at my annual banquet, I will distribute to each the reward her actions merit. But this year, alas, I find myself compelled to also inflict several punishments."

A murmur of alarmed surprise ran among the assembled fairies but this soon subsided, for the Queen continued:

"You cannot guess how it pains me to be compelled to reprimand anyone, yet as you know, a good government cannot exist unless rebellion and cruelty be repressed at its starting point. We are beloved by mortals because we have never harmed them, yet the day we cease to do so, that day, they will cease to love us. Alas, some of my subjects have forgotten this and they have deceived the unfortunate mortals who trusted them. It is on their sinning heads that my punishment is going to fall."

She paused for an instant and looked about her. All the fairies were pale, while several were trembling. The Queen now said:

"Fairy Nux Vomica, rise."

The fairy obeyed. Her face was livid while her downcast eyes were filled with a powerless rage. Her dress was one of the most beautiful in the room. It was made of silver brocade, sprinkled with diamond dust and trimmed with garlands of white flowers and small orange-like berries, produced by the tree after which she was named. Falling from her shoulders and almost touching the floor were long strings of ashy-gray, hairy seeds, which at the least movement fluttered around her like a transparent mist.

The Queen looked at her for some time in silence, but she supported that reproachful look without outward emotion, only her eyes took a crueler, angrier glare. After a while the Queen said :

"Fairy Nux Vomica, the plants which have been placed under your care, had until lately been noted for their beauty alone; now they have become the dread of all those who know their evil properties. The envious thoughts which of late have filled your heart, have caused the seeds produced by your plants to become poisonous and to bring death to all those who taste of them."

A murmur of alarm ran among the fairies and the Queen paused until it had subsided. Fairy Nux Vomica alone remained calm; she did not seem to care what the others thought of her. The Fairy Queen now continued :

"Envy is the most debasing of all faults, yet I might have pardoned you, had not your evil heart caused you to tell to all envious mortals how by the use of the poison to be manufactured from your seeds, they might rid themselves of their rivals. Already a number of deaths

have resulted from the use of this new poison. Your crime is great, so your punishment must be severe; therefore for the year which is to follow I will take all magic power from your wand. That is all, you may resume your seat."

The fairy's face was terrible to behold, her lips were half-opened as though she was about to protest; but simply casting on the Queen one long, lingering look of hate and menace, she resumed her seat without having spoken a word. Though the Queen felt she had just made a terrible enemy of the cruel and dangerous Nux Vomica, she nevertheless continued her painful duty of punishing her unfaithful subjects.

"Fairy Aconite," she called.

The fairy who rose in answer to that name wore a very elegant costume, which was decorated by one of the plants under her care and which, under the name of Monks-head, is often seen in the gardens of our English cousins. The skirt of the dress was made of a white fleecy silk that resembled a cloud, and pinned to this vapory mass by diamond stars were erect stalks of blue flowers. The bodice was of green like the foliage of the plant, while on her head was placed one of the large hood-shaped blue flowers.

She looked at the Queen with bold, proud eyes, while her thin lips parted in a smile of defiance. This attitude somewhat angered the Queen, for she said very sternly:

"Fairy Aconite, the charges against you are very grave; the harm you have done is even greater than that accomplished by Nux Vomica. She told of her poisonous properties to only a few persons, while you have put yours in the

hands of a tribe of savages. You have shown them how, by uniting the sap of three of your plants, they could make the most dangerous of poison, the deadly *biklh*.

"Queen," interrupted the fairy with a proud toss of her head, "you should at least hear my reasons for acting thus, before you judge me to harshly."

"Your reasons, child, you can't have any, for what good do you hope to accomplish by placing in the hands of ignorant men the most dangerous of poisons?"

"I told them that I might help them in their wars. They were oppressed, they were chased from their native soil and they came to me for help, which I gave them because they were weak and unhappy."

"Oh, Aconite, how your words pain me. You wish to help war, the most disgracing of all human institutions. Why help to kill when simple words might settle the dispute, why shed blood and destroy life when more consideration on both sides could quell anger and avert fight!"

Once more the fairy interrupted her by saying:

"What you say would be excellent if the strong would cease to oppress the weak, if the powerful would—"

"Silence, Aconite!" ordered the Queen, "your words might move me if I did not know why you helped the rebel savages. You are proud, you want honors, so you thought to gain them by winning the respect and confidence of these uncivilized men. You even hoped that this might make you greater than I. Pride always comes

before a fall, Fairy Aconite. So to punish you for your evil thoughts and still more evil actions, I exile you for two years from my kingdom. Though you will still retain your immortality you will lose all your magic power and will remain rooted to one spot like any other plant. Your transformation into a flower will only begin to-morrow; until then you will still have the power of motion. Sit down."

An expression of rage passed over the fairy's face, then with a smile of hate and menace she said with mock humility:

"Your will be done, oh Queen, only let me warn you that you will regret having punished me so unjustly."

The Queen did not reply to this insolent retort, but turning to the other end of the table, she said:

"Fairy Opium."

With slow and listless movements the fairy rose from her seat. Though she wore a very costly dress, there was something slovenly about her. Her skirt was composed of long hair-like fringes, resembling the interior of the white poppy from which opium is taken, but it was so crimped and dirty in appearance that it disgusted instead of charmed. Her bodice was of a whitish green and was stained at different places by spots of milky juices. Her whole aspect was one of indolent neglect and indifference. The Queen after looking at her for some time without speaking, said:

"Though I have often been compelled to reproach you for your laziness, I never had occasion to make such grave charges as those I must

express today. Laziness is the fault that leads to other crimes. You did not wish to be the only slothful person in the world, so you taught to mortals how with the juice which comes from the capsules of your seeds, they might be lured into sleep peopled with many pleasant dreams. Now through your evil advice there roam about the world men who, though they have a human form, are as useless as the rocks that lay by the wayside. You must be punished and your punishment must strike you in your laziness, so for the year which opens to-day you will not be granted one moment of sleep. That is all. Fairy Hemlock."

Fairy Opium looked at the Queen for some time before she obeyed, then being too lazy to protest, she resumed her seat, while Fairy Hemlock rose from hers.

Her dress of bright green silk, spotted with purple, was covered with large clusters of small white flowers which gave out at the least movement, a strange disgusting odor. The Queen now spoke, saying:

"Fairy Hemlock your jealousy is the cause of your fall. You were envious of those flowers that grew fragrant as well as beautiful, and you cursed nature because she did not make you distil sweet odor as does the rose and the violet. Your feelings of rage became so intense that you soon became insane, and instead of pouring sap into the plants under your care, you poured into their veins the juice of your insanity. Now one man, discovering your evil properties makes use of them, and already several persons are raging maniacs, caused by the use of your dangerous

plants. I can not take from your plants their poisonous properties, but that you may not be able to inform mortals of your fatal qualities, I take from you the means of doing so, by making you dumb for the year which will follow."

"Oh, Queen have mercy!" cried the fairy in terror, "do not punish me thus, and I swear to you that I will become good again."

"I have spoken," sternly replied the Queen, you will be dumb for one year, your punishment commencing at twelve o'clock to-night. Be seated."

The fairy was going to burst into tears when Nux Vomica, by whose side she was seated, murmured in a low voice in her ear:

"Idiot, have at least enough pride to conceal your pain and trust in me; you shall not be dumb anymore than my wand shall lose its magic power."

The Queen heard the muttered words and with a smile of scorn she remarked carelessly:

"Do not trust too much in Vomica's words, Fairy Hemlock, for until she can take from me the Gold Laurel Branch, she will be powerless to resist my orders. As you all know, it is guarded by the 'Genii of the Branch,' and with his hundred eyes he will see enough to guard it from such as you."

Then turning toward the end of the table, she said in the same calm tones:

"Fairy Bella-donna."

Proud and cold, with an expression of anger in her cruel, black eyes, Fairy Bella-donna obeyed the Queen's order. She wore a black velvet dress, the sober tint of which was relieved by

garlands of purple flowers and green leaves. Around her bare neck and arms were strings of shining black berries which glittered like diamonds:

Bella-donna, your fall has been caused by the anger which always fills your revengeful heart. Unable to control it, when you saw that mortals preferred other flowers to those over which you watched, your rage became so great that you decided to avenge yourself. Your thoughts became so cruel that the plants under your care were turned by you from the most harmless of flowers into the most dangerous of poisons. One day a little child seeing your pretty black berries was tempted by you to eat of them. He obeyed and died a few minutes later amid terrible agonies. To punish you for this act of cruelty, I will make it impossible for you to harm anyone from twelve o'clock to-night until the same hour of next year's banquet; you will be plunged into the deepest slumber."

Bella-donna tried to protest, but with a gesture of command the Fairy Queen silenced her. Then with a sigh of relief she called out the name of the last fairy who had incurred her just anger.

"Fairy Lobelia," she said.

The fairy rose with a graceful movement. There was something at once alluring and menacing in her face, while her smile was both winning and dangerous. Her dress was made of such fine and gauzy material that it seemed as though she was surrounded by a cloud of bluish smoke. She looked at the Queen with a fearless glance which seemed to say that she was not

afraid. The Fairy Queen was speaking now:

"It has been with growing terror that I have witnessed the harm some of the plants under your care have been working on unsuspecting mortals. Tobacco, the principal of the plants over which I have set you to guard, is the one that is doing the most harm. At first it was used only as an ornament in the gardens; but later when men learned to smoke its leaves, it became the greatest ruler of the world, since men, poor and rich alike, became its subjects and its slaves. For its sake men will neglect their most sacred duties, they will leave wife and child to starve rather than give up the use of tobacco. This in itself would have been enough to arouse my anger but you were not satisfied in merely making men your slaves, you sought to make them also your victims. You have succeeded in your evil designs. Already a number of youths, who have used to excess your fatal plants, have died from the effect. To punish you for your crimes I condemn you to feel the same slavish longings as those endured by the tobacco user, only you will never be able to satisfy them."

And with a great sigh of relief she continued with a sad smile:

"Now that my painful task is accomplished, I can give myself up to the joy of rewarding those who have been faithful."

Then rapidly, she called the fairies' names and bestowed a gift to each as a reward for the good actions performed during the year which had just ended. When she had finished, she rang a tiny bell which hung from a gold chain fastened to her belt. In answer to this call, the Genii of

the Branch made his appearance carrying a huge red velvet cushion on which laid the Gold Laurel Branch, from which the Fairy Queen derived most of her power of doing good and of checking evil.

The Genii of the Branch was an immense giant having a hundred eyes scattered all over his body. His face was so hideous that the fairies themselves shuddered when they looked at him. He now walked up to the Queen and kneeling at her feet, held up to her the Gold Laurel Branch.

It was about three feet long and was made of solid gold sprinkled with diamond dust. The leaves were so perfectly imitated that were it not for their golden tint, one would have thought it was a real laurel branch.

The Fairy Queen now motioned the fairies to draw near, and rising from their seats they advanced one by one to the throne before which they knelt, giving their wands to the Fairy Queen. She took them one by one and resting them on the Gold Laurel Branch, murmured a few words in an unknown language, then returned them to their owners.

Only the disgraced fairies stood apart. In a low voice Fairy Nux Vomica was saying to her companions:

"While the others will be dancing, I want you to meet me at the Crystal Palace."

"But it is the palace of the Genii of the Branch," broke forth Fairy Opium with evident fear; "besides it is a good ways off and will make us quite a walk."

"Oh, you lazy creature," remarked Belladonna with great scorn in her tones, "for my

part I am willing to do anything Nux Vomica will order, if she will only promise to save me from the punishment the Queen has threatened to inflict upon me."

"I swear to save you, only you must promise to obey my orders. Now we must separate, for if we talk too long together, it might arouse the Queen's suspicions."

The Genii now rose from his knees and the Fairy Queen said to him:

"Thank you, dear faithful servant, for the care you have taken of the Laurel Branch during the last nineteen years. Take as good care of it for the year which begins to-day and you shall gain your reward, that of becoming the most handsome Genii the world or the heavens has ever known."

"Why can't you make me handsome this year, oh Queen!"

"Because it is the rule that only twenty years of service to the Laurel Branch will give beauty to the one who has been faithful."

He gritted his teeth in anger, but did not reply, and bowing to the Fairy Queen took his departure. After he was gone the Queen touched the table with her wand and in an instant a hundred white spirits bore it away through an opening in the floor which closed itself as soon as the table and its servants had disappeared. The Queen then ordered the orchestra to sing some lively dance music, then she said to her subjects:

"Come, my dear children, let us make merry to-night, for it is the best night of the whole year, since it heralds in the most beautiful of the four seasons—Spring!"

While she spoke, she walked to the large glass doors of the palace and opening them wide began to sing in the language of the fairies:

"Ye spirits, come on phantom wing,
From starry heights afar
For Pleasure holds high carnival,
And ye her vassals are."

In an instant the vast hall became filled with bright spirits whose bodies resembled flames of different colored lights and their faces with their well kept beards and fine mustaches were extremely handsome. A few minutes later, they had secured partners and were dancing away with the fairies in a beautiful weird dance, until it seemed in the whirl of the waltz as though each fairy was carried away by a flame.

PART II.

THE PLOT.

Standing in a group apart from the gay dancers were the disgraced fairies. No one had asked them to dance, they were as little noticed as though they had not existed; for that reason anger and disappointment filled their hearts. Fairy Nux Vomica, who was very fond of dancing was full of rage against the Queen and the other fairies. She muttered to herself:

"I shall have vengeance for this insulting neglect. They had better beware of arousing my hate. I am to be feared when once my anger is aroused."

She was going to walk away from the ball-room when Fairy Rose and her partner, a bright pink flame, came and rested on a sofa at a short distance from where Nux Vomica stood. She paused to hear what they were saying:

"Oh, Fairy Rose," the pink flame was saying, "do you know you are becoming more beautiful every time I see you. The noble thoughts of your heart beam on your face and beautify it. It is the same with the flowers under your care, for they too become more beautiful day by day, and mortals learn to love them more and more."

A blush of pleasure tinted Fairy Rose's cheeks, then with a smile she replied:

"Dear Pink Flame, do not praise me so

much, for you might make me vain, and as you know, vanity is a very bad fault."

"You are too good to ever become vain, my dear Rose. But can you tell me what has caused Nux Vomica to become so hideous? Why, her face has such a cruel expression that she is positively repulsive. And," as he looked with increasing wonder around him, "Aconite—Opium—Hemlock and even Bella-donna and Lobelia have also lost all of their beauty. What has happened to them?"

"I—I would rather not tell you, dear Pink Flame. I never like to repeat evil reports against any one."

"You are right, Rose. It is always better to speak of the good and to forget the evil. You are truly noble. Come let us continue to dance; you must be rested by this time."

They were off in an instant, dancing so lightly that their feet did not seem to touch the floor. Fairy Nux Vomica watched them for some time, her eyes flashing with rage, her thin lips parted in an evil smile. She now left the ballroom and as she hastened to the Crystal Palace, muttered to herself:

"So I am hideous, am I? No one will dance with me because my jealous Queen has deprived me of my beauty. Ah, I am scorned and hated by all, but never mind, my turn will soon come," and she walked rapidly on, a dangerous light burning in her cruel eyes.

Fairy Forget-me-not, who had been dancing with a handsome pale blue flame, now said to him, in her soft and tender voice:

"Oh, Blue Flame, I have a favor to ask of you."

"Whatever that favor be, it is already granted," he replied.

"Then make that poor Aconite dance. She is very fond of dancing yet no one has asked her to-night."

"How can any one care to dance with such a homely creature?"

"Oh, Blue Flame," reproached Fairy Forget-me-not in grieved tones, "I would never have thought you capable of saying such a thing. Is she not miserable enough to know herself to be homely; it is cruel of you not to notice her on that account."

"My dear unselfish Forget-me-not, you have just taught me a lesson. So though it costs me much regret to leave you to go to her, I will do so immediately to punish myself for my selfishness."

As he spoke, he led Fairy Forget-me-not to a chair and after bowing low before her, went to where Fairy Aconite stood beside Bella-donna and Hemlock. He tried to come near to the disgraced fairies but something seemed to push him back, and no matter how hard he tried he could get no closer than three paces from her.

"How does it come, Fairy Aconite, that I can't get any closer to you? Are you trying to repel me by your magic power?"

"Oh, you cowardly flame," exclaimed Aconite in angry tones, "that heartless Fairy Forget-me-not has been telling you of my disgrace, and she has sent you that you might make me suffer by your scornful manner."

"Your disgrace?" questioned Blue Flame in wonder, "I don't understand what you say. For-

get-me-not has told me nothing. Explain yourself."

"You lie!" cried Aconite, foaming with rage. "You surely do not mean to tell me that Forget-me-not has danced the whole evening with you and not told you that I have been exiled for two years. And not satisfied at seeing my humiliation, she has sent you that you might insult and wound me. I—."

"Fairy Aconite," he interrupted coldly, "you wrong a noble, unselfish fairy. Your bitter words now show me the reason why your face has lost all of its former beauty. Those whose hearts are bad can never have truly beautiful features, for the face is said to be the mirror of the soul. If you wish to regain your lost charms, you must first begin by chasing the evil thoughts from your heart."

And bowing before her, he walked away. Aconite then turned to her companions saying in bitter tones:

"Come, let us leave this hall where all are determined to insult us. Fairy Nux Vomica has told us to meet her near the drawbridge of the Crystal Palace. She must be waiting for us."

The three fairies left the ball-room and as they stepped on the terrace they found themselves face to face with Fairy Lobelia.

"I was just wondering where you were," said Fairy Aconite on seeing her, "we are going to meet Nux Vomica at the draw-bridge. You are coming with us, I suppose."

"Yes, only I must go and wake up Opium. She is sleeping in one corner of the ball-room. She wants to get a few moments' rest before the Queen's punishment takes effect."

"Very well, go to her and return quickly for we will walk slowly while waiting for you."

They walked on and Fairy Lobelia entered the ball-room, in a retired corner of which Fairy Opium had fallen asleep. She went up to her and shaking her rudely by the arm, whispered in her ear:

"Wake up and hasten with me to the drawbridge of the Crystal Palace. Nux Vomica is waiting for us."

Fairy Opium opened her sleepy eyes and looked up at her with a mild show of anger:

"I think you could let me rest a little while. It will be bad enough to have to stay a whole year without sleeping, so you might let me sleep while I still have the power to do so."

Fairy Lobelia shrugged her shoulders as she replied:

"A fairy so thoroughly lazy as you merits the punishment the Queen has given you. But we are too generous to leave you to your fate, so follow me and you shall be saved."

Fairy Opium tried to protest but Lobelia interrupted her and seizing her by the arm, half dragged her away.

Soon all the disgraced fairies were assembled by the drawbridge waiting for Nux Vomica to speak. She was seated on a rock by the moat into which flowed liquid lightning. Her brow was contracted in thought and for a while she did not seem conscious of the presence of her companions. At last she rose to her feet, saying as she pointed to the Crystal Palace which glittered brightly in the moonlight:

"Our only hope lies in there."

"I don't understand you. What do you mean by those words?" asked Bella-donna.

"I mean that we must have the Gold Laurel Branch before midnight."

"The Gold Laurel Branch!" they exclaimed in one voice as they started back in terror.

"Yes, the Gold Laurel Branch," she repeated with a sneering smile.

The fairies looked at her in surprise and dread, while Fairy Aconite exclaimed:

"Hemlock must surely have been feeding you with some of her dangerous plants for you are mad, most hopelessly mad."

"Not as mad as you seem to think," replied Nux Vomica; "before thus crying out against my plan you should at least give me time to explain myself. So don't interrupt me and let me tell you what I intend doing."

The fairies crowded around their leader and Nux Vomica continued in a low voice:

"As you all know I have often been sent by the Queen to bring some choice food to the Genii of the Branch. I therefore know the magic words which alone will admit a stranger within the Crystal Palace. I can enter it any time."

"I don't doubt that," remarked Hemlock, "but when in the castle what can you do? You seem to forget that the Genii of the Branch is a very powerful man and that he never sleeps, for he has a hundred eyes, and that he will never let you take away the Branch."

"It is not my intention to take the Branch from him; all I want is that he should follow us and take the Branch with him. I suppose you all noticed the look he cast on the Queen when

she told him he must remain another year in the enchanted castle. He was angry with her and it will not be hard to compel him to follow me. Just wait for me here and you shall see; only be ready to depart with me and the Genii of the Branch when we return together."

Without waiting for a reply she walked up to the edge of the moat and began to sing:

Ye dwarfs of white, that guard the bridge,
The Queen commands, ye must obey.
Lower the bridge, to touch the ridge,
Make no demands, the password's "Bey."

While she sang a huge hail cloud supported by twenty-five dwarfs dressed in floating white garments, descended and covered the moat in which the lightning continued to flow. Fairy Nux Vomica stepped on the cloud but as she did so, with a great crash of thunder the cloud partly opened and a shower of hail fell on the rich harvest beneath. This was the first time such a thing had happened but the weight of Nux Vomica's meanness had caused the drawbridge to open and devast the painfully raised crops of the unfortunate farmers.

Nux Vomica was surprised by this unusual occurrence so she hastened across and entered within the walls of the castle. Here she paused. In spite of the assurance she had shown before the other fairies, she was afraid. Yet remembering she had no time to lose, she hurried rapidly across the courtyard and at last paused before the door of the Crystal Palace. Her voice was somewhat tremulous with fear as she sang the magic verse which alone would force the door to open:

"Oh, crystal door on magic hinge,
Turn—I've a message from the Queen.
Open! for I must quickly pass,
And ne'er reveal what I have seen."

The crystal door, all studded with diamonds and rubies, opened wide and Nux Vomica entered. The palace had but one room of an immense size. In the center, on an altar of white pearl was placed the cushion on which rested the Gold Laurel Branch. At the four corners of the altar were tall vases of gold in which burned precious gems which gave out as they burned, bright colored lights. Seated on a gold chair placed close to the altar was the Genii of the Branch.

All around the room, growing in pots of gold and silver, were the trees and plants which grow on earth and over which the fairies watched. Here, however, the leaves and branches were of emeralds while the flowers according to their color were either of rubies, sapphires, pearls or diamonds. Hanging from the ceiling were seven stars, one large one in the center and three small ones on each side of it. These cast such a bright light throughout the room that one not accustomed to it became almost blind.

The Genii of the Branch was adding some gems to the burning vases on the altar when Nux Vomica entered. He looked at her and asked in a terrible voice which caused the crystal walls to tremble as though they were about to break:

"Why do you thus come to disturb my peace?"

"That my eyes might feast for an instant on the magic beauty of your face, oh most beau-

tiful of all Geniis," replied Nux Vomica in tender accents.

The Genii opened all his eyes, half of which had been closed during the first part of the interview.

"My beauty," he repeated in surprise, "no one ever told me I was beautiful."

"Oh, I am not in the least surprised. Our Queen is clever enough to know that it would never do to let you know how great are your bodily attractions, for you might wish to become greater than she. She is jealous of your wonderful charms; for that reason, she keeps you herein solitude."

"Are you sure you are not mistaken?" questioned the Genii eagerly as he gazed with a pleased smile at his reflection on the polished surface of the pearl altar.

Nux Vomica saw by the manner in which he had spoken these words, that it would be an easy task to make him do what she pleased, so she replied with much ardor.

"I am sure of what I advance, otherwise I would not have spoken, for my own eyes prove to me that you are handsomer than the Fairy Queen. Besides to become more powerful than she, what have you to do? Just seize that Gold Laurel Branch now within the reach of your hands and you will become the master instead of the slave; you will cease to obey for you will have the power to command!"

"I touch the Gold Laurel Branch!" cried the Genii in terror; "why, don't you know that whoever touches it, is turned into stone. Oh, no, I'd never dare!"

Nux Vomica laughed scornfully at the sight of his fear, then drawing closer to him she said:

"If you are afraid, I am not, for that story of being turned into stone is so absurd that even a child would not credit it. Just let me touch the Branch with my hand and you will see that there is no danger;" so saying she rested her hand on one of the glittering gold leaves of the branch, then turning to the Genii she continued:

"Now let me explain my plan to you. To-day the Fairy Queen has inflicted unjust punishment on myself and five of my companions. If you desire it, we are ready to become your most humble subjects, we would make you greater than a king for we would crown you Emperor of the Black Empire, and we would be ready to obey your slightest wish. Will you accept our offer?"

"Willingly if I could only be sure that trouble would not follow the taking of the Laurel Branch."

"I have just touched it and no harm has come to me; but if you are still afraid, I will take it from its cushion and carry it, in spite of its weight, until the castle door."

"No," cried the Genii rising, "if there is any danger, I must bear it alone. A pretty Emperor I'd be if I allowed one of my subjects to sacrifice her life for my sake."

While he spoke, he seized the Gold Laurel Branch with a hurried gesture, and when he saw he was not turned into stone he heaved a great sigh of relief, which soon changed into a cry of boundless terror as he saw that the Branch was no longer of gold but had turned to a greenish copper.

"See, see!" he cried, pointing at the Laurel Branch.

Nux Vomica turned pale, but concealing her fears she said hastily:

"That's nothing, great and noble master; what matters the color so long as the magic power remains? But come, dear Emperor, let us not tarry long in this enchanted palace. Come, I will introduce you to your other subjects, who are eagerly waiting to call you master. When once out of here we can try if the Laurel Branch has still its magic power."

The Genii of the Branch, or rather the Black Emperor, as we will now call him, followed Fairy Nux Vomica and together they crossed the drawbridge, and another hailstorm descended on the earth devastating another vast extent of fertile country.

With a proud gesture the Black Emperor saluted his subjects, then seizing the Laurel Branch in both hands, he ordered:

"Laurel Branch, send me the means to travel to Mount Vesuvius, in whose fiery depths I have determined to make my royal palace."

Before he had finished speaking seven huge vampires had lighted at his feet. Mounting the largest and handsomest the Black Emperor ordered his subjects to take the others. At that moment with great cries of terror the fairies and their partners, the flames, came rushing into the garden after the Fairy Queen. She ran up to the Black Emperor and called him back, but he only replied with an evil laugh as he urged his steed on.

"I am no longer your slave, vain and selfish

Queen. With the Laurel Branch in my power, I have become more than your equal, I am your superior. Farewell."

And he was off, followed by his evil subjects, while cries of consternation rose from the good fairies.

PART III.

THE CROWN OF GOODNESS.

Amid the cries and lamentations of her subjects the Fairy Queen alone remained calm. Her face, however, was very pale while her eyes were filled with tears which as they flowed down her cheeks were turned into diamonds.

"What shall we do, oh beloved Queen?" questioned Fairy Rose, as she came up to the Fairy Queen. "They have taken all our power from us!"

"You seem to forget, my dear child, that your wands have been charged with magic power for one year. Besides—," she hesitated, then said: "come, let us return to the palace, I have something to tell you."

They returned in silence to the palace. All the faces were sad, the careless happiness of a while since having given place to the deepest gloom. The Queen took her place on the throne and the fairies crowded around her, waiting for her to speak. For some time she remained lost in thought, utterly unconscious of their presence. At last she raised her head and said sadly:

"Oh, if I could only be sure that they would not use their power for evil. But alas! the words the Black Emperor is now pronouncing shows me there is no hope of their doing good."

"Can you see them, oh Queen?" questioned the stately Fairy Dahlia.

"Yes, I see them," answered the Fairy Queen.

"Oh, tell us what they are doing?" implored Fairy Camelia.

The Queen remained a few minutes with half closed eyes, then she began to talk as though speaking to herself:

"They have just alighted at the top of Mount Vesuvius. The Black Emperor is looking down into the crater of the volcano. Oh, the cruel smile which parts his lips as he says:

"We must now trace our mark in the world by deeds of cruelty."

"Nux Vomica interrupts him by saying: 'Most noble Emperor, before thinking of destroying, you had better try to make us more beautiful.'

"'Make *you* beautiful,' he replies with his evil laugh. 'That I can never do. Meanness and beauty can never go together. Instead of becoming more beautiful you shall get more and more hideous. The only way you can avenge yourself of your fairer sisters is by harming them as much as you can. Now let us descend into our fiery Empire.'

"Oh, how unhappy I am to feel that my power though still very great is not great enough to crush those who possess the Laurel Branch and use its magic power for works of ruin and death!"

"You still have some magic power left, dear Queen?" eagerly questioned Fairy Sweet-pea, as a ray of hope stole to her face.

"I have," was the Queen's reply. "Until now I had thought best to let you suppose that all my power came to me from the Laurel Branch alone. That, however, is not the case."

So saying the Fairy Queen took her crown from her head and with a sad smile pointed to the glittering stars which composed it

"Behold these stars; each one contains a magic charm and the crown which you believed I simply wore as an ornament is in truth the famous, 'Crown of goodness' of which you have heard so much. The one who wears this crown must never have one mean or lowly thought, otherwise the stars would lose their power and become worse than useless. When I had the Laurel Branch coupled with the crown, I was considered the most powerful Fairy Queen either on earth, or in the air or in the waters of the sea. Yet I would not regret my lost power if I was sure that the Laurel Branch was in the hands of those who would use it for good. Yes, I would even give up my crown, my sole remaining power, I would consent to become a subject, a simple fairy like yourselves, if in exchange they would promise to do good instead of evil. Yet alas, this can never be!"

As she spoke these unselfish words the face of the Fairy Queen beamed with a new light, while the stars in the crown she held in her hand glittered more brightly. And now from the large star in the center came a low sweet voice which said:

"Noble Fairy Queen, do not grieve so much, for though the Laurel Branch may remain long years in the hands of your rival, you can still with our aid undo much of the harm the evil Black Emperor will try to work on trusting mortals. Within each of my six sisters is concealed enough of the magic power to charge the

wands of six of your followers, while in myself you will find a double power well suited for your own wand. The more good you accomplish the stronger will become our power, for we gain our strength in the goodness of those who possess us. As years go on and our power increases you will find means to regain the lost Laurel Branch. I have spoken, and perchance will never speak again. You have both to remember my words and to act accordingly."

The fairies had listened in amazement to that magic voice which they heard for the first time. The words of hope which it had uttered had caused their faces to assume a cheerfuller aspect. The Queen replaced the crown on her head, then said:

"My dear subjects, you have just heard what the Star has said. You see that kindness has other rewards besides the pleasure it always brings to be good and kind. So let us all unite in a combat against the evil workings of the Black Fairies, so that we can sooner recover our lost Laurel Branch and enjoy once more the happiness of seeing everybody happy and contented. How many of you are willing to enter into this battle for good and against wrong?"

In an instant all the fairies had answered, "I."

The Queen was pleased by this prompt answer, and she was about to thank them when a bright Purple Flame came up to her and bowing low said:

"Most noble Queen of the Fairies, I have a favor to ask of your goodness. Will you not let us, Flames of the Night, take part in your work as you have let us do in your pleasures? Though

we are small and may seem light and careless, we are nevertheless willing to work and to struggle for your sake and that of your dear subjects. Pray, do not refuse our service which we offer you so gladly."

This offer so moved the Queen that she was sometime before replying; then she said with emotion:

"Dear Purple Flame, the offer you have just made has shown me that until now I have misjudged you and your companions. I had thought that being so fond of pleasure you never had any serious thoughts. I now discover that your hearts though gay are yet noble enough to remain faithful to their friends in spite of their misfortune. This, alas! does not happen; so I accept your offer with pleasure, and when my lost powers have been returned to me I will reward you as you merit."

"We desire no other reward but your affection and your thanks," replied the Purple Flame with a bow.

The Queen thanked him again, then said:

"We have no time to lose, dear subjects, for perhaps while we tarry our enemies are already at work on their evil plans. As we would be losing precious time if all of us would keep watch on the bad fairies, I will appoint six of you and six flames to watch over the six Black fairies, while I will keep guard over the evil Black Emperor."

"Oh let me watch!" came eager demands from all sides, for all the fairies desired the honors and the dangers of the position.

The Queen smiled at their eagerness, then said:

"I can't appoint all of you, my dear children, but as I know there exists no jealousy in your hearts, I will give the painful task to those whom I think can best accomplish the duties this responsibility will impose upon them."

She remained lost in thought for some time, then said:

"Fairy Rose, I will give to you the care of watching over Bella-donna. Whenever she is about to accomplish some harm, use the magic power of your wand to lessen or undo it, as the case may be. Should you, however, find that you have not enough power, you can send Pink Flame, whom I appoint as your assistant and messenger; and I will give him my wand and my instructions. To drive your chariot you will need a steed, so I give to you the Pink Parrot who I know will serve you faithfully."

While Fairy Rose and the Pink Flame, both blushing with pleasure, were expressing their thanks, the Queen was looking around her; and seeing Fairy Violet in a retired corner, she motioned her to advance.

"Fairy Violet," she said, when the fairy stood before her, with her sweet blue eyes down-cast, "I give you charge of Fairy Aconite. She is your opposite in every respect. You are retiring, she is bold, therefore your modesty will be made to combat her arrogance. Your companion will be the Violet Flame and your steed shall be the timid yet tender Turtle-dove."

Without waiting to hear their thanks she bade Apple Blossom to advance, then said:

"Fairy Apple Blossom, you are one of my busiest subjects, for you never rest. Yours are

the first trees that bloom in the Spring, while your fruits are the last to be harvested; and during all the warm Summer months you work without ceasing to make the rosy-cheeked apples which children love so well. I will set you to watch over Fairy Opium, who is the laziest of all the Black Fairies. White Flame will aid you in your task and your steed shall be the Blue Bird, that bright messenger of Spring."

She next called Fairy Lily-of-the-Valley and said to her:

"My tender Lily-of-the-Valley, to you I will give the charge of the cruel Fairy Hemlock, for your gentleness will easily combat her violence. Rainbow Flame will be your assistant and the Robin Red Breast will serve you as steed."

The Fairy Queen then hesitated before she decided between Fairy Sweet-Pea and Fairy Forget-me-not. At last she said:

"Fairy Forget-me-not, I think you will best know how to combat the evil actions of Lobelia. Watch her with great care for she works amid the vapor of her smoke and it will take sharp eyes like yours to see through these clouds. You, Blue Flame, who always like to linger near Forget-me-not, will have the pleasure to follow her always and to take care of her steed, the Night-in-gale."

While Fairy Forget-me-not and the Blue Flame were uttering their thanks the Queen had looked over her assembled subjects, and her eyes resting on Fairy Lilac's beautiful face she smiled as she beckoned her to advance; then said:

"Nux Vomica will make a very active fairy for you to watch over, my dear Lilac, and you

and Lavender Flame will have much work on your hands in order to undo the harm she will seek to accomplish. But I am sure you will acquit yourselves of your task with credit. The swallow, swiftest of all my feathery messengers, will be your steed. Now, dear guardians of the good, depart on your various missions, remembering only that on you depend our future hopes of regaining our lost powers."

The six fairies thus chosen mounted their steeds, and with the flames to light them on their way, departed and only paused when they saw Mount Vesuvius looming stern and terrible in the distance.

Meanwhile in the Fairy Palace in the clouds, the Fairy Queen was saying:

"Purple Flame, you who have so generously offered us your aid, and that of your companions, I am going to attach you to my person in the watching of the Black Emperor. For the present I wish you to enter the dismal depth of the Vesuvius and mingle with the flames that play around the altar on which has been placed the Laurel Branch; you can watch over his actions and listen to the orders he will give his evil followers. Red Flame will be your companion and he will serve you as messenger when you wish to warn me of coming danger. Do you accept this dangerous and unpleasant position, dear Purple Flame?"

"Oh, Queen," he cried in joyous accents, "I can't express my happiness at the thought of the trust you place in me, and I promise you that I will try to do my best to be worthy of it."

"But what are we going to do?" questioned

Fairy Sweet-pea. "Could we not aid a little in the deeds to be accomplished for the recovery of the Laurel Branch?"

"Certainly, my dear child, I would never think of depriving you of the pleasure that a good action always bring to a noble heart. For this year at least your wands have magic power and I give to each of you the order to make the most of this power while it lasts. I must, however, reserve a guard of fifty fairies to remain with me in the Palace in case I'd need them to go to the aid of one of my six messengers of good."

In a few minutes the Queen had selected the fifty fairies she wished to remain by her side and after giving to the others her last instructions she let them depart with the Flames of the Night. Then she said to her companions:

"Now, my dears, we have nothing to do but wait and live in hopes that our Laurel Branch will soon be returned to us."

And they waited.



THE RED BIRD PRINCE.

War had been declared between the rival kings. Great preparations were made in both kingdoms, for the war was to be long and bloody. One of the Kings was noted for his justice and goodness, the other for his cruelty and meanness. So when the good fairies heard of the proposed war, they decided to side in with the noble King, while the bad fairies willingly took the part of the King whose evil instinct pleased them very much.

The good King, whose name was Nicholas, was a very noble man, beloved by all his subjects and respected by the rulers of all nations. One day as he was distributing different posts to the officers of his army, a servant announced the arrival of a young prince named Armand, who desired to have an interview with the King.

Nicholas gave orders to have him admitted at once into the council room. The young prince entered; he was tall and handsome and his face was so full of noble thoughts that one admired and loved him at first sight. He wore that day a suit of bright red velvet with strings of pearls upon his bosom and a silver sword at his side. Walking up to the King and bowing low before him, he said:

"My beloved master, King Felix, has sent me, Prince Armand, to tell you that hearing of your trouble with the evil King Alinama, the enemy

of all civilized nations, he desires to aid you in the coming struggle by sending you some of his bravest generals and as many of his soldiers as you may need. As to myself, he gave me permission to remain by your side and to aid you in whatever undertaking you may desire. Let me, however, ask as a favor, that I be given the most dangerous post, that I may prove my affection to you and the cause you so nobly defend."

King Nicholas was moved by the young man's words, so turning to one of his generals, he said:

"General, I was undecided about who to give to you as *aid-de-camp*; now I think Prince Armand will make a fit assistant for a brave man like you, since he comes from a nation where all men are noble and courageous;" then to the young prince, he added: "Prince Armand you desired a dangerous position; your wish has been granted, for General Michael has the charge of one of the southern forts, and as this borders on the enemy's territory, and is therefore the keystone to our position, they will surely try to take it from us."

Prince Armand dropped on his knees before the King and thanked him for the confidence he placed in him, swearing that he would seek to prove himself worthy of the trust. While he was rising from his knees, a surprised servant rushed into the room and going to the King cried:

"Oh, Sire, there is in the hall the most beautiful woman I have ever seen. She came to the Palace in a chariot of solid gold, inlaid with glittering gems and drawn by five hundred white

doves. She calls herself the Queen of the Fairies, and says she desires to speak to you."

King Nicholas was so surprised that he was some time before speaking, then rising he ordered to the waiting servant:

"Let her enter, for we have nothing to fear from the noble Queen of the Good Fairies."

The servant left the room and an instant later the Fairy Queen appeared. Never had she appeared so wonderfully beautiful as to-day. She wore a dress of white brocade embroidered with threads of gold and silver, while looped over this was a thin gauzy lace of pale pink, so fine and light that it resembled a cloud on which the loving rays of a setting sun had called a blush of pride.

The stars which shone from her crown glittered so brightly as to illuminate her face with a dazzling luster. She was surrounded by a bright purple light which denoted that Purple Flame was near.

The King was so startled by her beauty that he was at a loss what to say. She smiled at the sight of his surprise and emotion, and walking up to him said:

"Noble King of the North, I am the Queen of the Good Fairies and I reside in the clouds. One of my messengers from the earth has told me of the preparation you were making to go to war. In this war, I have decided to aid you for the reason that your enemy, King Alinama, will be aided by the Emperor of the Black Fairies. If we did not aid you, in spite of your courage you would never be able to conquer. Will you accept our aid?"

King Nicholas had recovered from his surprise

by this time and with a courtly bow he replied:

"It is with great thankfulness that I accept your generous offer of aid, dear Fairy Queen, and my soldiers knowing that they have the good fairies on their side, will, I am sure, accomplish wonders. So thank you, dear and noble Queen, for thus coming to me in preference to going to my rival."

"If I come to you, King Nicholas, it is because the sentiments of your heart are noble, and the cause for which you fight is just. I never approve war, for it is both sinful and useless, and had you been the one to begin the quarrel, I would not have come to your aid. But you are menaced, your enemies desire to take from you a portion of your kingdom and to make of your subjects slaves. You defend your rights, and in so doing merit my approval and my affection. Now that I have become your ally, I must warn you of a great danger which now menaces you. The enemy is marching toward one of your frontier forts, the very fort you have just given to the care of General Michael. If they succeed in taking this, the result of the war will be doubtful. You must therefore see that the enemy does not capture it."

The King turned to the General and to Prince Armand and said, hurriedly:

"You have just heard what the Fairy Queen has said and as you have the command of the fort, it is for you to see that it is not taken. Prince Armand, you desired a dangerous post, you must now be satisfied."

The Prince once more expressed his thanks and was going to follow General Michael, who



After saying a few more words to the king, the Fairy Queen departed.

was hastening to the door, when the Fairy Queen detained them by saying:

"One of the bad fairies, named Aconite, has taught your enemies how to make a deadly poison called *biklh*, which they have added to the lead of their balls, which causes all wounds, no matter how slight, to prove fatal. If I allowed this, your army would soon be so greatly diminished that the victory would not be hard to win. With the sap of all the flowers under my care I made a drink, one drop of which taken in a glass of water will render the one who drinks of it freed from any fear of being poisoned by the enemy's balls."

As she spoke, she rang a tiny bell that hung from a silver chain tied to her belt. An instant later a small dwarf dressed in floating white silk garments entered the room. He bore on a gold platter a bottle of the finest crystal, which was filled with a pinkish liquid. The Queen took the bottle and giving it to the general said:

"Put one drop of this in each glassful of water and see that your soldiers drink of it before entering into battle. Now hasten, you have no time to lose."

After saying a few more words to the King, the Fairy Queen departed, while General Michael and Prince Armand were hastening to the fort at the full speed of their swift horses.

It was dark when they reached the fort, and fearing an attack that very night they called the garrison together, and after telling them what the Fairy Queen had said made them drink of the saving fluid contained in the crystal bottle. The soldiers, made happy by the thought that

the good fairies were on their side, swore that the enemy would never enter the fort unless it were over their dead bodies. Pleased by their reply, General Michael gave out the posts to the assembled soldiers and after bidding the rest of them to sleep with one eye open, he turned to Prince Armand and questioned:

"You must be very tired, I suppose?"

"Oh no," replied the young man, "I was just going to ask you to give me a post for the guarding of the fort."

"I am glad you make that demand, because there is one part of the wall that has been damaged during the last war and has been illy repaired. That place is therefore the key to our position since at that spot the moat is shallow and it would not be hard for the enemy to re-open the breach and enter into the fort. If you could pass the night there, I will see tomorrow to the fortifying of that weak point, the only one in the whole fort."

The young prince was overjoyed at the trust thus placed in him, and after expressing his thanks he hastened to depart to his post. He had been walking up and down for an hour when suddenly he found himself face to face with a strange man, whose features were most repulsively hideous.

"What are you doing here," cried the prince in angry tones as he drew his sword as though to strike the man.

"Mercy," implored the stranger, "I am only a poor man and do not wish to do any harm."

"Why are you here, then? Besides, do you know the pass word?"

The man gave the word, then drawing closer to the young prince he said in low hurried tones:

"The enemy is coming here to-night and the post you guard is the only one by which they can pass. General Michael has placed you here, because being jealous of your courage he wishes to have you killed before your deeds of valor would bring the notice of his King upon you. If I were in your place I would show this jealous man that I have seen through his game and I would let the enemy enter and take the fort. In their gratitude they would give you a large sum of money with an important command in their army."

Prince Armand's eyes flashed with rage, but trying to appear calm, he asked hoarsely:

"Who sent you to me with this offer of treason?"

The man lowered his voice still more as he replied:

"It is the General-in-chief of King Alinama's army, who to-night wishes to capture the fort."

Prince Armand, who had been controlling himself with great pains, now rushed with uplifted sword, to strike the man who had dared offer him to become a traitor. But to his astonishment the vision disappeared and his sword struck through the empty air. The man who had thus come to tempt him was no other than Fairy Nux Vomica who had thus disguised herself that she might speak to the prince without arousing his suspicions. But now that she saw he was determined to kill her, she had made herself invisible and had hastened outside of the fort

to keep counsel with the other bad fairies who were waiting for her.

Prince Armand looked about him in surprise and when he was sure he was alone, he thought:

"I must have been dreaming, for no one would have dared offer me, a subject of the noble King Felix, to become a traitor to the friendly nation we so love;" and he laughed, "What, if anyone had seen me during my wild anger against this vision of my excited brain? he would surely have taken me for a madman."

The prince now resumed his walk, listening intently for any sound that might warn him of the presence of the enemy. All at once he was startled by a voice calling him from behind.

"Prince Armand."

He turned and at a short distance from him was a little boy of some ten years of age. He was holding a glass of water in his hand.

"What do you want?" he asked kindly, for he greatly loved children. "And what brings you here at this hour?"

"If you please, dear Prince," he replied timidly, "it be General Michael that sends me to you with some of the precious water given by the Fairy Queen. As he was going to bed he remembered that you had not drank any of the water and he sent this to you."

The prince laughed as he took the glass, saying as he did so:

"That dear general is very kind to thus think of me. I shall drink this to please him."

He drank the water and handing the glass back to the boy, said as he patted his head with a friendly gesture:

"You can return to General Michael and tell him I am proof against King Alinama's poisoned bullets."

While he spoke a strange feeling stole over him, his eyes half closed and a strong desire to sleep came to him. He struggled against this feeling, exclaiming as he dragged himself about with staggering footsteps:

"What has come over me? I feel like going to sleep. Oh where is that boy, I am thirsty—I must have more water—I must call for help—I—"

He could say no more for he dropped to the ground and after groaning hopelessly for some time he fell asleep. The little boy now came up to him. He looked into his ghostly face and a cruel smile came to his lips as he murmured to himself:

"They laughed at me when I claimed I could succeed after Nux Vomica had failed. They will now see that lazy Opium can be of some use after all." Then looking at the sleeping prince she continued regretfully: "I only wish I could go to sleep also. As it is, I must go and warn the enemy that the gallant prince is sleeping."

General Michael had retired to his room and had just fallen asleep at his desk. Suddenly he was awakened by something brushing past him; he looked up and there above his head he saw a white flame. Startled by this unusual sight he was leaping to his feet when a voice which seemed to come from the flame said:

"General Michael, the enemy is at the breach. Prince Armand has been put to sleep by a narcotic drink and they have re-opened the breach

and after entering have seized the young prince, who they are now taking prisoner to their camp while columns of the enemy are marching up toward the fort. Hasten to give your orders and show that the soldiers of King Nicholas can never be surprised; they are always ready to meet the enemy."

General Michael leaped to his feet and buckling his sword as he ran, soon called the garrison together, and when the enemy arrived they were repulsed with such force that half of the attacking soldiers remained dead on the battle-field, while not one of General Michael's men received a wound. After the roll call, the General said to his soldiers:

"My children, there is but one man missing from our ranks and that man is the noble Prince Armand, who is now in the hands of the enemy. By the aid of the bad fairies they had him put to sleep at his post of honor, then they seized and brought him to their camp as their prisoner. What they intend doing with him I do not know, but what I do know is that we must go to his rescue. He has come to us from our friend King Felix, he has proved his courage and his affection for our country by desiring the most dangerous position; we must not abandon him now that he is in danger. To-morrow at daybreak we must rush upon the enemy and take the prince from them. What do my soldiers think of this plan?"

With great shouts the soldiers proved to their chief how willing they were to follow any order he might give. General Michael, much pleased by their prompt reply, said with great emotion:

"Thank you, my dear soldiers, I now see that King Nicholas has a great right to be proud of his army; you are well worthy of being the soldiers of such a noble King. Now rest until morning and when the time to fight arrives remember that the right is on your side."

Here he was interrupted by the sound of a shrill, harsh laughter; looking around him, General Michael saw only a huge bat, which frightened by the lights of the torches, was flying over the walls of the fort. Thinking he must be mistaken, he waited until the soldiers had disbanded, then he retired to his room.

Meanwhile the bat was flying rapidly onward, and now it descended into the enemy's camp and from its back Fairy Lobelia descended. During the time she had been in the fort she had made herself invisible by causing a cloud of smoke to surround her. It was her laughter that had so startled the General. When she had alighted all the bad fairies crowded around her.

"What are they doing at the fort?" asked Bella-donna eagerly.

"They have decided to come and take the prisoner away from us."

"Oh, that must never be," broke in Nux Vomica, her eyes flashing with anger, "that man must die. If he had listened to me last night when I offered him to become a traitor, I would have become his best friend. As it is, he must die; he is too good to live for he would aid our rivals to take from us the Laurel Branch. Opium, you have put him to sleep, you must wake him now, for I must arouse

his anger that the General may be forced to have him put to death."

While she spoke she led the way to the tent where Prince Armand lay asleep. Fairy Opium went up to him and touching his eyes with her wand, she ordered:

"Awake."

The young prince opened his eyes and looked about him in surprise. The bad fairies began to laugh and Nux Vomica said:

"So, my handsome prince is waking up at last. You have slept a very long time and while you thus rested the enemy has taken the fort and you have been made prisoner."

Prince Armand leaped to his feet and looked about him in despair. When he realized that he was indeed in the enemy's camp, he had a wild fit of rage and he cried, as he tried to draw his sword:

"Men of my race never fall alive in the hands of the enemy. If they do not conquer they at least know how to die."

But he discovered that his sword had been taken from him, and with a wail of despair he dropped back upon his bed, saying:

"I had forgotten that I was a prisoner."

Fairy Aconite now said:

"Come, Nux Vomica, you had better tell the general that the prince has awakened."

Nux Vomica hastened to the general's tent and she was admitted at once. Bowing to the general she said in the honeyed accents she knew so well how to assume:

"Most noble General, the prisoner we were so fortunate as to capture last night has just awakened. He is raving mad, yet I think he is afraid. He is so young that it is natural for him not to want to die. If you were to offer him his life in exchange for the plans of the fort, I am almost certain he would give them to you. You can try at least, but should he refuse, it is your duty to kill him without mercy."

"Your advice is always excellent, dear Fairy Nux Vomica. I will send some soldiers to get the prisoner. I would like you to remain with me while I speak to the prince."

A few minutes later Prince Armand entered, guarded by two soldiers. The bad fairies followed him, but fearing the general might not allow them to remain, they had made themselves invisible. Prince Armand was calm and his face though pale did not express fear. The general looked at him for sometime then said in a voice he tried to make very gentle:

"My dear Prince, I am glad to see you take your captivity so calmly and I hope that it shows you will listen favorably to what I have to say to you."

The general paused, but Prince Armand did not reply. There was an expression of boundless scorn in his eyes, while on his lips played a pitying smile. Something in the expression of his face angered the general, for he said:

"It is our custom to kill all prisoners of war, but as you are so young, I have decided to make an exception and to grant you your life, only on one condition."

He paused again but still Prince Armand remained silent; but the expression of his face became more mocking than ever.

"We must know the exact plans of the enemy's fort, and you must give them to us in exchange for your life and your liberty. Decide promptly for I have no time to waste."

Prince Armand put his hand to his sword; then remembering he was a prisoner he replied:

"My anger almost made me forget that I am entirely in your power. To such offers as the one you have just made me, men of my race never make a reply. Yet, evil General of a depraved King, let me tell you once and for all that I prefer death to disgrace and shame."

These words caused the general to become furious, for he leaped to his feet and ordered:

"Take this man and bind him to yonder apple-tree, then shoot him without mercy. Hasten to obey my orders."

The soldiers departed, followed by the bad fairies, who began to dance gleefully around the doomed man. When they reached the apple-tree, Prince Armand said with a proud toss of his head:

"Men of my rank are never bound, for we know how to face death without fear."

The soldiers hesitated, but the general coming up to the spot said as he bowed to the gallant young prince:

"Prince Armand is right. Anger made me forget that he was a prisoner of noble descent. So send for twelve soldiers and let the execution take place at once, for the enemy is about to march on us and we must be prepared to receive them."

The soldiers soon arrived and were placed in line before the doomed prince with the order to aim at the heart. They levelled their guns then waited for orders. Prince Armand stood proudly before them; his face was very calm, but his position, with his hand resting on his hip, denoted so much courage and defiance that it angered the general still more, for he hated to see brave men in any nation but his own. He was going to give the signal to fire when a beautiful blue-bird bearing Fairy Apple-Blossom on its back alighted at the foot of the young prince.

Fairy Apple-Blossom wore a most beautiful dress. The skirt resembled an inverted apple-blossom while the bodice was of the tender green of the young leaves when they first appear in early spring. From a tall pointed hat hung a long veil of the palest pink, and which the breeze caused to float around her like a mist. Her face was wonderfully beautiful, while her voice as she now spoke was soft and sweet like the sound of the summer wind as it plays with the leaves in the tree-tops.

"Cruel General," she said, "you were about to kill a noble man, whose courage and nobility should have won your admiration and your pardon. I was at work among the blossoms of my apple-tree when I saw what you were going to do, so I came to save the prisoner."

"Save him!" cried the general with an evil laugh. "Why, I would have you killed first."

"Kill me!" replied Fairy Apple-Blossom in the same kind voice; "do you not see that I am a fairy and can never die."

"That may be so, but one thing I do know is that you will not take the prisoner from me, for the first movement he makes to escape I will have him shot by my men."

Fairy Apple-Blossom had a sad smile; then turning to Prince Armand she touched him with her wand, saying:

"Prince Armand, I turn you into a red bird until you reach—"

"And I," cried Fairy Opium stealing up from behind and touching the prince with her wand just as he was being turned into a bird, "I say that you will always remain a bird."

At that moment a white flame descended from a huge cloud above the camp and placed a solid gold wand, at one end of which shone a tiny star, in the hands of Fairy Apple-Blossom, and said:

"The Fairy Queen sends you her wand, knowing that you would need it to undo part of the harm done by Fairy Opium's evil wish."

A pleased look stole over Fairy Apple-Blossom's face, and taking the wand she touched the prince, saying:

"No, you shall not always remain as a bird. If a princess is turned into a flower by some of the bad fairies and if you rest upon that flower, both you and she will resume your former shapes. You will afterward marry her. During the time you remain as a bird you will still have the power of speech in the language of mortals. Now depart. General Michael wishes to attack the camp; you can tell him how it is situated."

The Red Bird rose in the air and the general, who had been too surprised to move, cried to his men:

"Fire, fire on the bird. Five thousand dollars to the man who kills him."

The soldiers fired but the bird flew on, protected by a cloud the fairies had placed between him and his enemy's balls. The general, now blind with anger, turned to where the fairy had stood, but she had disappeared. He then turned to the bad fairies and cried:

"You're a fine lot of fairies, to allow one fairy to get the better of six of you. To think you allowed that man to escape, while you hold in your hands wands that you claim have magic power!"

Fairy Aconite turned toward him with a snarl, then said in bitter tones:

"If we could have stopped him, rest assured we would have done so. Though we have taken the Laurel Branch from the good fairies they still have the Crown of Goodness, and this is powerful enough to stop us from doing what we please."

"Hush," interrupted Nux Vomica suddenly, "do you not hear the march of the enemy as they advance toward us? General, instead of making vain reproaches you had better see that your soldiers are ready for the battle which will begin in an instant."

The general was rushing away to give orders when a shower of balls struck the camp and the soldiers, thus taken by surprise, became so frightened that they began a disorderly retreat, in spite of the general's efforts to call them back. Never was a defeat more complete; of the splendid army King Alinama had sent for the capture of the enemy's fort, nothing was left.

Some were made prisoners, many were killed and the rest of them deserted.

The general remained on the battle-field; he was dangerously wounded. He wanted to die, for he felt sure that after his defeat he would find himself forever disgraced in the eyes of the King. The bad fairies knew that he lay there wounded, but wishing to punish him for his harsh words of the morning, they left him there to die.

It was almost dark; the sun had been set for some time and the wounded general, burned by fever, was dying of thirst. In his agony he was calling for aid, when all at once he heard a strange twitter in the sky and looking up he saw the Red Bird Prince descending to him.

"I am lost," he thought. "That man whom my cruelty has caused to be changed into a bird will now take his revenge."

The Red Bird now alighted a few feet from him, and seeing the terrible state in which the unfortunate general now found himself, went up to him and said in his kindest tones:

"You are wounded and need help. What can I do for you?"

"You— help *me*, you who I have so wronged!" cried the general in surprise.

"All is forgotten now that misfortune has struck you," replied the Red Bird kindly. "You surely are in need of something; let me get it for you."

"Water, get me some water," implored the wounded man.

The bird fled away and returned a few minutes later with his bill full of water, which he

poured into the general's mouth. Five times he went for more, then the wounded man's thirst being quenched, he said to him.

"I am a very strong bird and if you can get on my back I will carry you to your family and they will nurse you back to health."

The general hesitated, but the Red Bird so pleaded that at last he consented. Before the sun rose the following morning, the bird had deposited the wounded man before the door of his home. With tears of gratitude in his eyes the general thanked the noble bird, saying:

"Your soul is truly noble for you can return good for evil. The noblest vengeance is to forgive, for it makes a friend of your enemy."

The Red Bird only left him when he saw that he was well taken care of by his family; then he returned to the fort. During the remainder of the war the Red Bird Prince became a very useful messenger between King Nicholas and his generals, as he carried all the important dispatches beneath his wings.

After the war was over the Red Bird Prince came to General Michael and King Nicholas to bid them good-bye.

"I can be of no use to you now," he said in departing, "and as winter is setting in I must depart for a warmer climate, for as a bird I can not stand the hardships and the cold I could endure when a man. I am going to China, and I will remain there until I receive a message from the good fairies, telling me that the time of my liberation is at hand. So farewell; you will not see me again until I can come to you as a prince."

And the Red Bird Prince had departed followed by the regrets and love of the King he had so well served, and for whose sake he had been changed from a handsome prince into a bird.

LADY ROSE.

One year after the war between King Nicholas and King Alinama, King George, a powerful king of the north, became the father of a beautiful baby girl, and wishing that his child should have all that a mortal could wish, he sent invitations to all the good fairies, so that they might stand as god-mothers for his daughter.

All the fairies would have accepted this invitation, but their Queen, fearing that she might need some of them to undo the harm that the cruel Black Emperor was always doing, only gave to six the permission to go. The number fully satisfied the King and Queen and they rejoiced at the thought of the brilliant gifts their daughter's fairy god-mothers would bestow upon her.

Great preparations were made in the palace in honor of the King's distinguished guests. The large hall, where the banquet was to be served, was decorated with the flowers that represented the fairies on earth. On the walls, the floor and the ceiling, on the long table, with its beautiful plates of gold and silver, enriched with diamonds and rubies, were loads of roses, forget-me-nots, lilacs, violets, apple-blossoms and lilies-of-the-valley.

The great day dawned at last and at an early hour the fairies arrived at the castle, and were greeted by the King and Queen and all the nobles of the court. Fairy Rose, Fairy Forget-

me-not, Fairy Violet, Fairy Lilac, Fairy Apple Blossom and Fairy Lily-of-the-Valley, were about to take their places around the loaded table, when suddenly a frightened servant entered the hall and hastened to the King, saying:

"Oh, your Majesty, what shall we do? A fairy you have not invited is at the door and asks for admittance. She is most terrible to look at and she laughs so strangely that we are all so frightened, we don't know what to do."

The King and Queen were aghast while the fairies looked at each other with troubled glances. The King did not know what to do at first, but fearing that his new guest was a bad fairy coming to give an evil gift to his child, he was about to answer that not having invited her, he did not care to have her admitted. But Fairy Rose reading his thought came forward and said:

"Sire, take my advice and do not close your door on this fairy. She is I fear a follower of the Black Emperor, whose kingdom is in the depths of Mount Vesuvius, and she comes here to harm your child; but she can do more injury if you refuse admittance than if you——"

Here Fairy Rose was interrupted by a cruel hissing laughter. All turned in the direction from whence it came and they trembled at the sight which met their frightened gaze.

There, in the open doorway stood a dwarfish creature not more than a yard in height, whose body had the twisted appearance of a vine climbing around a tree. Her dress was composed of woolly green leaves and alternating between these leaves were small, dull red flowers which

resembled spots of blood; while in her long, black hair, played live snakes which twisted and coiled about her head, showing their little black and crimson tongues to those who neared their mistress. Yet the evil glitter of their black eyes was nothing to compare with the cruel expression of the skinny face above which they played.

When the fairies caught sight of the newcomer, they cried in one voice:

"Fairy Bella-donna!"

She laughed again, then in a voice which had the hiss of a serpent, she answered:

"Why yes, fair sisters, I am Bella-donna, and though the plant I represent brings death to all who eat of it, I am a flower for all that."

Then turning with an evil smile to Fairy Rose she continued, trying to give to her harsh voice the honeyed accents of pain:

"Ah, Rose, you are not charitable to tell the King that I wished to harm his little daughter, while for so many days, I have traveled, urging onward my dear steed, the tarantula, that I might arrive in time to add my gift to those you will bestow. But now, most noble King, let not my presence delay the banquet, and after giving me the humblest place at your table, let us feast with due ceremony the christening of the sweet young princess."

The King by this time had recovered from the fear caused by the unexpected presence of Bella-donna, and reading an entreating glance in Fairy Violet's mild blue eyes, he answered as he bowed humbly before Fairy Bella-donna:

"My dear madam, you are welcome to share in the rejoicing of the day, and my only regret is

that not knowing you were coming I am not prepared to receive you as you merit. I did not know of the existence of the beautiful flower you so sweetly represent, so I have not placed it among my decorations. Still, feeling sure that your heart is as fair and lovely as your form and face, I know you will pardon this lack of honor, since it is so involuntary."

The King's word caused an expression of wonder to steal over Bella-donna's evil face, giving it a softer light. This did not escape the King, so he continued in the course he had taken, for he saw that his words had succeeded in touching the Fairy's hardened heart.

So at table he gave her the honored place, and the other fairies, as eager as himself to see the cruel Bella-donna pacified, watched eagerly the workings of her face, and were pleased to note that in spite of her meanness she had not fallen so low as to be insensible to flattery. Only Fairy Rose was not deceived by this changed appearance, for she alone realized the danger of Bella-donna's presence. So she remained thoughtful and sad while the others laughed and sang.

When the dessert was served, she rose and showing her wand, which by the power of her magic she had caused to resemble a common piece of wood, she said:

"Most noble King, I cannot remain longer, for by some unexplainable accident, I took this instead of my wand. It was only an instant ago that I discovered the mistake. I am therefore deprived of giving a gift to your child, so I will ask leave to depart."

And before anyone had time to detain her,

she had disappeared, leaving the King somewhat disappointed at what he thought to be her lack of courtesy. The dessert over, the fairies were shown into the next room which was also decorated with a profusion of flowers.

The child was brought in. It wore a beautiful robe of white silk trimmed with lace and jewels. All the fairies crowded around the little creature. Bella-donna alone stood apart; her face, usually so cruel and pitiless, had taken a new tender expression which already made her appear less hideous.

The King now addressed himself to his fairy-guests and said:

"If you are ready we will proceed with the christening of my daughter. You dear fairies are to be her only god-mothers."

Fairy Violet then advanced and amid a solemn silence said, as she touched the child with her glittering wand:

"On you, young princess, I bestow the gift of music. When you sing, the notes that shall fall from your lips will be like the songs of the angels, and the touch of your hands upon any musical instrument will draw forth such magic sounds that all who hear you will remain aghast with wonder and admiration."

After the King and the Queen had thanked her in their daughter's name, Fairy Violet retired to give place to Fairy Forget-me-not, who said in her sweet, low voice as she also touched the child with her wand:

"And I will give you beauty, a beauty so great that to see you will be to love you. Your face will so dazzle the beholder that when once seen you can never be forgotten."

Next came Fairy Lilac, who said:

"My sisters have already given you two very precious gifts and now I will make them complete by making you the most intelligent woman on earth. Beauty without sense is nothing, nor would a talent for music make people forget that you lack intelligence. Therefore, wee princess, to beauty and music I add a brilliant brain."

The faces of the King and Queen were beaming with joy to see what precious gifts were being bestowed upon their little daughter and in their hasty bliss they almost forgot that they had as guest the dreadful Bella-donna.

It was the turn of Fairy Apple-Blossom, who advanced, and in a voice that recalled the sweetness of Spring she named her gift.

"Intelligence," she said, "unless accompanied by eloquence, is useless, so I come to complete Lilac's gift by giving to you, my dear god-child, the talent of expressing your brilliant thought in such beautiful words that the wisest men will wonder at your wisdom."

When she ceased talking Fairy Lily-of-the-Valley took her place and said:

"My sisters have nearly exhausted all the gifts which we can grant to mortals. Yet I believe that I can still give one gift that shall complete the perfection of our dear child; and that is the talent for poetry. The verse which shall flow from the princess' pen will make her the best and most famous author that the world has ever known."

All the fairies had spoken and the King was going to order the nurse to take away the child, when with slow and noiseless footsteps Fairy Bella-

donna advanced toward the infant and said in loud angry tones:

"What, haughty King, do you not wish all your guests to endow your lovely child? Do you consider me too lowly to add my gift to those of my more favored sisters?"

The Queen turned pale, the fairies moved away in affright, but the King, remembering how a few hours before his gentle words had caused her evil face to soften, now forced himself to say with a feeble attempt to smile:

"My dear Fairy, I should be honored to have you add a gift to those already given my dear child, and I am sure that you will endow her with some of the noble qualities which flourish within your gentle heart."

Bella-donna started at these trusting words and she was some time before answering; then with a hurried gesture, as though taking a sudden decision, she said:

"Your kind words, oh King! have just worked a miracle. Until to-day all, from the beggar to the prince, hated me because I brought death to all who ate of me. Sometimes as I grew wild on the barren fields of Europe little children would begin to play with my pretty red flowers or handsome black berries, but with a cry their parents took them away, saying that they should not touch the mean, cruel plant which concealed poison and death in its sap. This treatment so hardened my heart that in my turn I began to return the hate all felt for me. Then I decided to avenge my wrongs by harming all who trusted me."

She paused. All awaited breathlessly for

her to continue, longing to know what she had to say, yet dreading to hear it. But now she spoke again:

"To-day I was sent by the Emperor of the Black Empire ——"

Here a shudder shook her listeners, but without paying any attention to the fright that name had caused, she completed her terrible sentence:

"—— to change your daughter into a snake like those that are playing in my hair."

With a cry, the Queen fainted and had to be carried away; the King and the nobles drew their swords as if they wanted to kill the evil creature who wished to work such great harm upon the innocent princess, while even the fairies raised their wands as if they too desired to protect their god-child. Amid all this excitement Fairy Bella-donna remained calm, for in quiet tones she remarked, turning to the King and the nobles:

"Why those weapons, O King? You seem to forget that no mortal can end my life, for I am a fairy, and therefore will never die; as to you sisters, your power is still great; but until your Queen has recovered the Gold Laurel Branch, which the Black Emperor took from you, you will be unable to harm me. Therefore, King and noblemen, return your swords to their places, and you fairies, lower your menacing wands, for though my Emperor has ordered me to change yonder baby into a serpent, your kind words compel me to disobey that order."

At this last sentence all drew a sigh of relief, but Bella-donna continued, unmoved by their pleasure as she had been by their anger:

"Instead of changing her into a hateful snake,

of whom all are afraid, I will turn her into the queen of flowers, that is the beautiful rose, whom all love and admire. This is the best my present state of disgrace with the Fairy Queen allows me to do to repay the kindness that has been shown me for the first time to-day."

"And I," said the sweet voice of Fairy Rose, who had entered unheeded and who now stood behind Bella-donna, "diminish the evil your gift would cause by adding that if she can reach the age of twenty-one before seeing a rose, she will be freed from the consequence of your evil wish. If, however, she should see one before that time she shall become a rose and must remain such until the Red Bird Prince shall free her by resting upon one of her branches. Should he meet with death during his long and dangerous journey, then our efforts will be powerless to save Rhoda—such is the name our Queen desires her to bear—from her awful fate."

As she said this she took the wand carried by Pink Flame and touched the princess with it.

All had turned at the sound of Fairy Rose's voice and they now listened eagerly to her words of hope. The fairy was more beautiful than she had ever been. The good action just accomplished had given to her face that divine luster that goodness always imparts to the features. With the good fairies each act of kindness imparts to them a new charm, while with the followers of the Black Emperor each bad action increases their hideous appearance, making them resemble still more their monster Emperor.

The dress of Fairy Rose was composed of layers of rose petals, while on her head was

placed a tall pointed hat from which floated a long pink veil that surrounded her like a cloud. It was easy to see that the fairy had just been in the clouds for she was covered with dew that sparkled like diamonds.

"I suppose you were angry, O King, when I left your banquet table without giving a gift to your child. My excuse was that I wished to serve her better by waiting. I knew that Bella-donna had been sent by the Black Emperor to work evil upon your daughter's life, so I decided to undo as far as was in my power the wrong she would try to accomplish. My wand, however, was not powerful enough to successfully combat Bella-donna's power; besides I wanted to consult with my Queen, so I found an excuse and hastening away, mounted my faithful steed, the Pink Parrot, and hurried to the Fairies' Palace in the clouds. Our gentle Queen already knew of Bella-donna's presence, having been informed by the faithful Pink Flame. She also knew that Bella-donna was going to change our god-child into a rose instead of a serpent. After telling me what to do, she gave me her wand and I hurried back to save your child from the cruel fate awaiting her. Now by ordering all the rose-bushes in your kingdom to be destroyed, you may save Rhoda from the danger to which she is exposed.

"As to you, Bella-donna, your present act of mercy toward our child entitles you to words of encouragement. Our Queen sends me to you as a messenger of hope. From now on, for every good action you accomplish your face will lose some of its drawn, skinny aspect and hideous

cruelty, while your heart will turn from black to red—from sin to purity. After a time, if you continue in the pathway you have chosen to-day, you will become more and more beautiful until you will once more be the fair and perfect Fairy you were before your fall."

Fairy Rose ceased talking, and after receiving the King's thanks for what she had done for his child, departed with her sisters and the accompanying flames to their home in the clouds. Fairy Bella-donna, her face already less repulsive, mounted her tarantula and departed, trembling with fear, for this was the first time she had disobeyed the Black Emperor since she had become his evil follower.

The next day the King sent out orders to all parts of his kingdom that all rose-bushes should be destroyed. If the order was disobeyed, the person guilty of the act would be put to death. When his subjects heard the order and knew why it had been made they did not hesitate to obey. One, however, disobeyed!

In the forest behind the palace lived a poor man and his crippled daughter. Her only companion was a beautiful pink rose-bush, which grew near the window by which she sat all day long, because her poor, deformed legs could not support her frail and sickly body. During the long hours of the cheerless day she would watch the flowers as they slowly opened their pink petals to the warming rays of the sun. When winter came and withered the green leaves she would still gaze at the tiny buds along the naked branches, and love them also because they gave promise of the fragrant blooms she loved so well.

So when her father told her of the King's order she burst into tears. After a while she calmed herself, then said with a sob of resignation:

"To save the King's daughter, you must destroy my dear rose-bush, the only thing I love on this earth, where I must suffer so much; still remember if you do kill it you will kill me also, for I cannot live without it."

The father was so moved by these words that he cried as he caught her in his arms:

"You are more precious to me than is the King's daughter, so cease to mourn, your rose-bush will be spared and for once I shall disobey the order of my King."

Blanche was so glad to hear this that she kissed her father over and over again. Thus it was that while the King thought that all the dreaded plants had been destroyed, one was growing almost at the palace gates.

Meanwhile Rhoda was growing in beauty and in wisdom and as the years passed the gifts given her by her fairy god-mothers became more apparent. Her face was so beautiful that one was dazzled to look at her, while her intelligence was so great that the oldest and most learned men in the kingdom did not dare to speak before her, lest she might discover their ignorance. When she played or sang, all was hushed around her, so great was the enchantment caused by the magic of her talent; when she spoke her eloquence was so great that no one could be found who dared answer her, and lastly her name was known all over the world for the wonderful beauty of the poetry which flowed from her gifted pen.

Only one fault was to be found in this peerless girl and that was her great pride. She had so many gifts that her vain little heart would whisper to her:

"You are above all others, for you are a princess, a beauty, a musician without rival, an author famous the world over, while people spend hours to hear you speak. You are so perfect that you have a right to be proud."

And Rhoda listened to that tempting voice: so she soon became the proudest woman on earth. She even thought her father and mother inferior to her, and soon her pride caused her to treat them with disdain. This greatly pained them, though of course they never said anything about it, because they were somewhat afraid of their brilliant and gifted daughter.

Sixteen years had now passed since at the christening of the fair Rhoda, Bella-donna had given her evil gift and during that time her parents had almost forgotten the awful fate to which their child was exposed. They felt so sure that all roses within the kingdom were destroyed that they let Rhoda go where she pleased.

One day, tired of her father's park, Rhoda took a book and went with her maid into the forest. This was the first time she had been tempted to go there, so she walked about a good deal, then feeling tired and thirsty she was going to return to the palace when at a short distance she saw a pretty white cottage surrounded by many bright flowers.

"Let us go there and get a drink," said the princess to her maid.

"Don't you think, dear princess, that it would

be better if we should go back to the palace for a drink. You do not know what kind of people live there."

"I believe," remarked Rhoda with anger, "that I have just expressed my wish, and you must remember that it is your place to obey. Don't forget this in the future. Whoever lives in that house, are my father's subjects, and as such they will have to treat me, his daughter, with due respect. Now come."

They entered the garden, but suddenly Rhoda seeing the rose-bush growing near the window uttered a gleeful cry and rushed toward it. She took one of the pink blossoms in her pretty hands, exclaiming:

"Oh, how beautiful!"

While she spoke, she felt something pulling at her feet, and looking down she saw that she was sinking into the ground, while all over her body green branches were shooting out, and lastly her head had changed into a large, pink rose of a wonderful beauty. The maid, who had witnessed this terrible change, was unable either to move or speak, while the cripple girl, by whose fault the accident had happened, was now wringing her hands and weeping bitterly, for she feared that the King would have her father put to death, for not having obeyed orders. Then she so pitied the beautiful princess, who an instant ago had been so full of life and beauty and who was now turned into a rose.

Rhoda realized that the wish of Fairy Belladonna, of whom her parents had so often spoken, was being accomplished, and that she was turned into a rose. She must remain thus until saved

by the Red Bird Prince. One thing that brought a little joy to her in her sorrow was that she still retained the power of speech. Calling to her the frightened maid, the Lady Rose said in a voice strangely gentle for the proud princess:

"Return to the palace and tell my parents what has happened. Only beg them in my name not to make anyone suffer, since I'm the only one to blame. That I am contented in my new state and will wait patiently until my prince comes to rescue me."

Yet as she spoke two bright tear-drops, as brilliant as diamonds, came to the surface of the flower and the servant understood that in spite of her brave words the Lady Rose was weeping. Still her order must be obeyed, so she hastened with all speed to the castle. It was with great fear that she told what had happened, to her royal masters,—and she felt very sorry when she saw the despair of the unfortunate parents.

The King and the Queen lost no time in going to the forest, but when they saw their beautiful Rhoda thus changed into a rose they wept bitterly over her while she sought to conceal her own suffering that she might not cause them more sorrow. The King was so angry when he saw the rose-bush that had caused Fairy Belladonna's wish to be realized, that he wanted the man and his crippled daughter to be put to death; but Rhoda, wishing to return good for evil, said sweetly:

"Don't harm them, dear father, they didn't mean to do wrong, I am sure. Then as I am growing in their garden they will take good care of me until my prince arrives."

A pretty blue-bird who had listened to this conversation, understood that the fairies would like to know what had happened to their god-child, so she took wing and soon arrived at the Fairies' Palace. The Queen greeted her with much kindness, and when she had finished her story, the Queen said:

"Dear blue-bird, your present action shows me that you have a kind heart, so I will give you charge of the unfortunate Lady Rose. See that no worm eats into her fair heart; in one word, be her companion, and when the Red Bird Prince comes to her, you can return to me and I will give you your reward."

The bird flew back to earth and took her post on a large oak-tree growing near the rose-bush. When she saw that Rhoda's head drooped in sorrow, she began to sing her sweetest notes and these would somewhat cheer the wretched Lady Rose. The fairies also watched over their unhappy god-child and attended to her wants. If the ground around her roots became dry, they caused a large cloud to form above her head and from it the gentle rain came to cool the thirsty plant; or at other times when the rose felt cold the fairies caused the sun to shine brighter and warmer for her sake.

Then her parents came daily and passed long hours talking to her and encouraging her in the long waiting for the prince. Still in spite of these constant attentions the rose was slowly pining away. Days had passed into weeks and weeks into months, and still the prince had not come. Already the cold winds of winter were chilling her tender leaves so that they had lost much of



Then her parents came daily and passed long hours talking to her and encouraging her in the long waiting for the Prince.



their bright green tints, while the petals of the rose were beginning to fall to the ground. At first Rhoda had liked her new state, but now she had become tired of always remaining in the same place, without books to read or pleasant companions with whom to talk. Then she was beginning to fear that the Red Bird Prince had met with some accident—perhaps he was dead; then she must always remain a rose, the most beautiful of her kind, it is true, but a rose just the same.

One day after her parents had left her more depressed, more despairing than ever, she heard in the distance a twitter she had never heard before. There was a plaintive accent in the tones like one in pain, then with a cry of joy she saw coming toward her a large red bird that fluttered painfully because of a broken wing. Before she had time to think, the beautiful bird had alighted on one of her branches. Scarcely had the bird's feet touched her than Rhoda felt herself turning into a woman once more, while there before her eyes the red bird was changing into a handsome prince. He was dressed in a beautiful suit of red velvet, with a silver sword by his side, gold rings on his fingers and long chains of pearls across his bosom.

They did not speak at first for they were too happy and surprised to find words with which to express their emotion. The prince, however, was the first to recover from his surprise, and said as he caught Rhoda's hand in his:

"Oh, beautiful princess, are you the one for whose sake I have traveled so far, for whom I received this cruel wound in my wing?—oh no,

I forgot that your sweet presence has once more changed me into a man! Are you the fair Rhoda?"

The princess blushed deeply as she replied timidly:

"Yes, I am Rhoda, and I have waited long for your coming, oh Prince!"

"They told me that you were beautiful, charming Rhoda, but I assure you I did not think or dare dream that a mortal woman could have a face of such pure beauty as yours. Will you be angry, Princess, when I tell you that I love you and long to call you my wife?"

When Rhoda told him that she was not angry but that she would like to become his wife, his happiness was so great he did not know what to do. But Rhoda remembering in the midst of her own bliss, her parents' misery, conducted the prince to the castle. It is needless to add that they received a warm welcome and that there was great rejoicing in the whole kingdom. A month later Rhoda married Prince Armand and they were very happy.

As to the blue bird who had taken such good care of the Lady Rose, the Fairy Queen made her the fairy of the birds. She was given an honored place in the palace and she bore the name of the Blue Bird Fairy.

THE MAGIC SWORD.

Prince Armand had been married several months when one day his wife asked him:

"Dear Prince, you never told me of the trials of your voyage, while as a red bird you were flying to my rescue. Nor do I know for what reason you had been turned into a bird."

"I never told you because you never asked me to, my dear Rhoda, and I feared my tale might weary you. But I will do so now if you desire it."

"Oh yes, please, tell me."

Then he related to her how during the war between King Nicholas and King Alinama he had been made prisoner of war and was about to be executed, when one of the good fairies, called Apple-Blossom, had rescued him by turning him into a bird.

"After the war was over," he continued, "I went to China, for the northern climate had become too cold for me since I had been turned into a bird. When I reached the swampy lands along the coast of China I was surprised to find large flocks of birds that exactly resembled me, but which of course had not the power of speech, as I had. They were called the Red Flamingo by the natives. I feared that the bad fairies might pursue me with their malice, so I associated with these birds. I soon learned their language and became very popular with the most of them. We

led a gay idle life and after the fashion of birds enjoyed ourselves very much.

"In spite of this I was lonesome, for I could remember the life I had led as a prince, and this made my present existence seem tame and unpleasant. One day, having walked some distance from my companions, I became tired and laid down to rest beneath a tea-plant. I was just going to fall asleep when a voice said above my head:

" 'Red Bird Prince, the time of your liberation is at hand.'

"I looked up and there amid the green leaves and white flowers sat a beautiful white-robed fairy. She laughed at my surprise and before I had time to question her she said:

" 'I am Fairy Camelia, and I have been sent by the Fairy Queen to tell you that in a northern country lives a beautiful princess, whom the bad fairies have caused to be turned into a rose. You must go to her, for by resting on one of her branches both of you will resume your former shapes and you will be very happy.'

" 'How will I know where to go?' I questioned.

" 'You must fly straight north, then west, and only pause when you reach a forest in which you will see a small white cottage, by the window of which two rose-bushes are growing. One of the bushes has many small roses, while the other has but one large double rose growing at the top. It is on this one that you must rest.'

"After giving me some other information as to the route I was to follow, the fairy disappeared. I went to bid goodbye to the other birds,

then departed for my long and dangerous journey.

"I met with many trials which the bad fairies put on my road that I might be delayed, perhaps never reach you. For three weeks a terrible wind storm coming from the north retarded my flight, while even at times I was compelled to pause altogether and wait until the wind went down. As I passed through King Alina-ma's kingdom, some soldiers, by the order of the bad fairies, fired on me and wounded me in the wing. It was with great suffering that I was able to continue my flight, but after I had crossed the border, I became so exhausted by loss of blood that I was compelled to descend to earth.

"For three weeks I was unable to continue my voyage, but during that time I was well cared for by a beautiful angelic girl called Lucie. I afterward learned that she was the daughter of King Felix, my beloved master. I firmly believe I owe my life to her. But my desire to continue my voyage was so great that I departed before I was entirely cured.

"After I had entered your father's kingdom, the only trouble I had was to find you, for the bad fairies caused great numbers of small white cottages with two rose-bushes growing by the window, within all the forests over which I passed. I would then descend and perch on one of the bushes, but the hoped-for transformation did not take place, and I was compelled to depart again, only to be disappointed again a few hours later. But what does the past have to do with our present bliss? The only thing we must do is to dream of the happy future."

A few weeks later Prince Armand and his wife were made very happy by the birth of a lovely baby girl. Rhoda exclaimed, on seeing that her baby was so beautiful:

"We must have for her god-mothers the six fairies, who were my god-mothers."

"Are you not afraid that some of the bad fairies might come also and give an evil gift to our child?" had objected her husband.

"Oh, no," replied Rhoda, "we will be so quiet about the ceremony that they will not hear of it. Besides, what have we to say against the bad fairies? They made us suffer for a while, it is true, but without them we should never have met each other."

Prince Armand never knew how to resist his wife's desires, so he let her have her way. She sent the invitations to the fairies, and in spite of what she had said about keeping the christening a secret, she made such great preparations that the news soon spread all over the neighboring kingdoms.

The night before the christening, after supper, all the inhabitants of the castle began to feel a strange, drowsy feeling, and at an early hour all had retired to bed and were sleeping soundly.

When all were asleep, a huge bat came flying above the moat and rested on the window sill of the young princess' bedroom. Fairy Aconite alighted from its back and in low tones said to the bat:

"Remain here until I return;" then touching the window with her wand, she said: "In the name of the Black Emperor, I order you to open."

The window opened and she stepped into the room. The nurse was sleeping in a large bed by the side of which was a lace crib in which slept the little princess. The soft light of a lamp fell on the wee features of the baby and she appeared so sweet and rosy in her lace coverlets that for a while Fairy Aconite hesitated. Then with a frown she muttered half aloud:

"Am I going to be like Bella-donna? Will the sight of that sleeping child cause me to forget the cruel punishment the Black Emperor has made Bella-donna endure. Yet," she paused and pressed her hand over her brow, 'yes, I must own it to myself, in spite of her disgrace with the Black Emperor, Bella-donna is becoming more and more beautiful while her voice has a sweeter, softer tone."

But with a movement of anger Aconite continued: "What's the use of all this? I must do my duty to the end."

Then hurriedly, as though ashamed of what she was doing, she took up the sleeping infant and laid in her place another just like her, only having a black heart instead of a red one. After that she looked about her for an instant, then hurried from the room; she closed the window behind her, and mounting the bat, ordered:

"To Mount Vesuvius, as fast as you can;" and pressing the child closer to her bosom, "Never mind, dear baby, though I took you from your mother, I will see that no harm comes to you."

A few hours later she alighted at the mouth of the crater of Vesuvius and turning to the bat, said:

"Wait for me here, I may need you again to-night;" so saying, she descended into the volcano.

The Black Emperor was seated on his throne of copper, and with his court of bad fairies was waiting for her return. When they saw Fairy Aconite enter, they cried in one voice:

"Have you the child?"

"Yes," she replied, as she showed them the sleeping infant. "Now, noble Emperor, what do you wish me to do with the child, for you surely do not wish to keep her here?"

"Certainly not," replied the Emperor with his evil smile, "a child would be a great burden to us. Let me think what I had better do with her."

He paused for a moment in silent thought, then said:

"There is in the kingdom of the baby Prince Osnofla, a deserted castle which is crumbling to ruins. It is inhabited by the wife of my favorite black dwarf. She will take care of the child and will feed it with her black milk. This food will soon turn her heart from crimson to black and she will thus become a fit follower of my evil teachings. You must take her there at once."

And Fairy Aconite departed.

During the time the Emperor had spoken, a purple flame had been playing around the fiery altar on which the Laurel Branch was kept. Now that the Black Emperor had ceased talking, it ascended higher and higher, until at last it reached the top of the mountain and mounted to a large cloud which had formed above the volcano, and on which was situated the Fairy

Palace. Hurrying to the Queen, Purple Flame, for it was he, told her of what had happened in the Black Empire.

The Fairy Queen frowned, then turning to Fairy Violet, who was standing by her side, she said:

"Violet, you have just heard that it is Aconite who wishes to harm Princess Rhoda's child. You must therefore go to her rescue."

"How can I save her?" asked Fairy Violet in dismay.

"It is very easy. You must mount your dove, and taking with you the wife of one of the white dwarfs, hasten to the deserted castle and replace the black woman with a white one."

"But Aconite will see the change."

"No, for I will change the white dwarf into a black one and make her resemble the evil nurse of the bad fairies, so closely that her own husband would not see the difference."

As she thus spoke she rang a small bell hanging at her side and an instant later a small white dwarf entered the room. In a few words she explained all that had happened, then asked:

"Do you think your wife would be willing to take charge of the young princess?"

"Oh, yes," he replied, "she is always happy when she can aid you in any way."

"Very well, send her to me."

A few minutes later a small woman about three feet high entered the room. Her face was very handsome and kind, while her white silk dress fitted her to perfection. Before the Queen had time to speak she said briskly:

"My husband has told me what you wanted

me to do, and I am wild with delight, for I love children."

"Then we have no time to lose, since I must change your outward appearance so that you may resemble the nurse whose place you are going to take."

The Queen touched the dwarf with her wand and pronounced some words which in an instant transformed the little woman into the most repulsive of creatures, while her dress changed from white to black. This done the Fairy Queen turned to Fairy Violet and said:

"Now depart immediately, for Aconite will soon reach the ruined castle, and you must have made the change before she arrives. You are not far from the castle now, since our cloud has been traveling toward it while we were talking."

After receiving all the needed instruction from the Queen, Fairy Violet departed with the nurse. Urging her steed onward to its full speed, she soon arrived at the ruined castle.

The black nurse, who guarded the castle, tried to oppose her plans, so she touched her with her wand and turned her into a bear without leaving to her the power of speech. After that she put the white dwarf in her place and making herself invisible, waited for Aconite's coming with the child.

She did not have long to wait, for a few minutes later Fairy Aconite entered holding the child tenderly pressed to her heart. Her face became very sad as she saw the evil features of the nurse, and she said with a sigh of regret:

"Your hideous features reveal to me the bad instincts of your soul, and this poor child will

find in you a very wicked nurse. Yet it is the Emperor's wish that it should be thus. I must obey orders, yet I would have preferred to give the care of the young princess to a better woman."

The woman listened to these words in silence, then she asked:

"You were not sent to thus talk to me? Give me the child at once."

The little woman's voice sounded familiar to Aconite and she looked at her with more attention, then a pleased smile parted her lips making her face appear less hideous. She gave the child to her, then leaving the room she murmured:

"That woman is a white dwarf, for I recognized her voice but I will not tell the Black Emperor of the change. That baby with its sweet, rosy face has caused my hardened heart to soften in pity and I am glad to think she will not grow up to be cruel and mean as I have become."

While she thus spoke a violet light filled the dark forest through which she was walking and looking up she saw a violet flame fluttering above her head. From it came a tender voice, which said:

"Aconite, live in hopes. Like Bella-donna your heart has been touched by the purifying flame of repentance, and if you continue in the pathway you have chosen to-night you will in time resume all of your former beauty and goodness."

The light disappeared and Fairy Aconite was once more plunged in darkness, but the cheering words she had just heard filled her heart

with gladness. She mounted the bat and returning to Mount Vesuvius told the Black Emperor that the child was in the safe keeping of its evil nurse.

The following morning when Rhoda went to kiss her child a strange feeling of repulsion seized her; but ashamed at what she thought to be her lack of motherly love, she covered the baby with kisses, then went to see if all was ready for the christening.

At the appointed hour the fairies arrived but the Prince and the Princess were surprised at their sorrowful faces which were not in harmony with the gayety of the occasion. During the grand banquet they were sad and silent; while the other guests fearing something unfortunate was going to happen became silent also.

After the banquet the guests were shown into another room, richly decorated in white brocade enriched with ornaments of gold. When the young princess was brought, Fairy Violet advancing to Princess Rhoda, said, as tears filled her mild blue eyes:

"My unfortunate Rhoda, I have bad news to tell you. The child the nurse is holding is not your daughter."

Rhoda uttered a terrible cry, then said:

"Oh, you surely are mistaken, Fairy Violet!"

"I only wish I were," replied Violet still more sadly.

"But how does it happen that I did not see the difference. This child is exactly like mine."

"Yes, the two children are exactly alike, only your daughter had a red heart while yonder baby has a black and evil one. During the night

after you had been put asleep by Fairy Opium, Fairy Aconite took away your child and put this one in her place."

"And what has become of my daughter?" cried Rhoda in despair.

"She is under the care of an excellent woman, whom the Fairy Queen has put in the place of the evil nurse the bad fairies had given her. She is in the ruins of an enchanted castle of the south. She will only be returned to you when a young and courageous prince will have rescued her from the castle."

Rhoda was weeping bitterly but Fairy Violet continued:

"Do not weep so hard, Rhoda, for no harm will come to your child while she is separated from you. Besides you still have the important duty of raising this child."

"Raise that child!" cried Rhoda with great anger. "Why, I am going to have her thrown out of the palace at once. I ——,"

"Oh, Rhoda, do not continue thus, for the words you have just uttered do not come from a good and generous heart!" mildly reproached Fairy Rose. "That infant is not responsible for the harm the bad fairies have done you. It is not its fault if it is born with a black heart. So do you not think it would be a noble task to make of that child, born of evil parents, a good and noble woman?"

Rhoda hung down her head, then said sadly:

"You are right, dear Fairy Rose, I will do my duty to the end, no matter how painful it may be. Only I don't see how I can conquer her bad instincts?"

"We have thought of that," interrupted Fairy Violet, who coming up to Rhoda, gave her a bottle of cut crystal on which was labelled in diamonds the word "*Modesty*."

"Princess Rhoda," she then said, "this bottle contains the precious nectar of modesty. Give her one drop of this every morning. When the bottle is exhausted she will have implanted in her heart the noble sentiment of modesty. Now, sisters, give to her the other qualities which she lacks."

Fairy Lily-of-the-Valley now came forward, and presented to Rhoda another bottle exactly like the other only with the word "*Purity*" upon it.

"I will give to her the gift of purity. One drop of this every morning will fill her heart with none but pure thoughts."

Next came Fairy Lilac, who said as she gave her bottle to Rhoda:

"This bottle will insure you the love of your adopted child, for it contains the sublime feeling and affection. It will give her the power to love everybody, and in loving save her from harming them."

Fairy Rose now came forward and with her usual winning smile, said:

"To conquer the evil instincts with which the bad fairies have gifted her, I give you this bottle which contains the precious nectar of generosity."

When she ceased speaking, Fairy Forget-me-not came up saying:

"Let her also be gentle. A gentle spirit makes the one who possesses it beloved by every-

one and no mortal creature can be called perfect who does not possess it. Now Apple-Blossom, it is for you to complete the making of this child."

Fairy Apple-Blossom came up and in her tender voice she said:

"The slothful person is of no use on earth, and the world would be better if there did not exist such useless creatures. In this bottle I have placed the sap of such plants as give to those who taste of them, the desire to work. Give her two drops of this every morning, for of all the qualities my sisters have bestowed upon the child, that of work is by far the most important."

Fairy Violet advanced once more and said:

"The Fairy Queen desires that this child be called Celestia, and places me to guard over her welfare, as well as that of your child, the little Princess Olga, named thus by the Queen after the good little daughter of King Nicholas."

After that the fairies departed and Rhoda, in spite of her sorrow at the loss of her daughter, began her task of making of the evil child of the bad fairies, a good and noble girl. Before very long the magic drinks contained in the crystal bottles began to show their effects upon the baby, and as years went on little Celestia showed all the good qualities with which the good fairies had gifted her, while her heart lost its black tint and became a beautiful scarlet like that of all the good boys and girls.

Meanwhile in the enchanted castle the Princess Olga was growing more and more beautiful. Her nurse had such good instincts herself that she taught her young charge how to become good and noble. Besides Fairy Violet

often came to the castle and spent long hours in speaking with her godchild, whom she learned to love more and more. The only regret she felt was to see the young princess condemned to remain forever in the castle.

So one day when the princess was nine years old, Fairy Violet decided that she must find a prince courageous enough to undergo the trials necessary to rescue the princess from the enchanted castle.

After traveling over many countries she was going to give up in despair when one day she chanced to see the young Prince Osnofa. His face, which expressed so much bright intelligence, and his courageous heart, showed her that he was just the one she wanted for the rescue of her godchild. Besides, he was just one year older than the little Olga, and it would be a remarkable feat for a boy of that age to save the enchanted princess.

One night while the young prince lay asleep in his lace-curtained bed, she entered the room and standing at the foot of the bed watched the young prince as he slept. All at once he woke and half rose from his bed as he questioned:

"Who are you?"

"I am Fairy Violet," was her timid answer, "and knowing you to be brave and noble, I come to offer you the dangerous task of saving the beautiful Princess Olga, who is held captive by the bad fairies. She is prisoner in an enchanted castle of your kingdom and can only return to her parents, if saved by a gallant prince who will risk his life to rescue her."

Prince Osnofa was now seated upright on his bed and looked at the fairy with wonder and admiration. Fairy Violet was truly beautiful that night. She wore a dress of white gauze, the skirt of which was covered with garlands of sweet-scented violets, while around her waist was a wide silver belt from which hung strings of pearls. The bodice was of the same material as the skirt, only it was covered with a net-work of silver threads, sprinkled with diamond dust. Her long blonde hair floated behind her like a cloud of gold, while from the tall pointed hat which covered her head hung a violet colored veil. In one hand she held her silver wand, while in the other she had a solid gold sword, all enriched with rubies and diamonds.

The prince was so surprised that he said nothing; so Fairy Violet continued in pained accents:

"You say nothing, oh prince! Can it be that you are afraid of the dangers——?"

"Afraid!" he interrupted angrily, "I pray you to remember that men of my race are never afraid!"

"I know that your forefathers were brave men, but you are still young and——."

"I am young in years, that is true; but my heart has the courage of a man. I like dangers, and I hate to be treated as a child, when I feel within my soul the strength of a man. You were just saying that an enchanted princess lived in my kingdom and you offer me to rescue her. I will do so willingly, even if it costs me my life. Now what must I do?"

Pleased by these brave words coming from

this ten year old prince, Fairy Violet was some time before answering, then she said:

"You are to go through, in the dead of night, a dark forest, peopled with evil beings and dangerous beasts which will try to slay you on the road. You must pass through a moat in which flows poison of such great strength that one drop of it would kill you immediately. Then you must fight with an evil black dwarf which guards the castle wall. He spits fire as he talks and has three hearts, each of which you must pierce before you can kill him. After you enter the garden, you must pass between two rows of enchanted trees which will try to seize you in their branches and thus smother you to death. At the castle door you will find a huge black bear which you must kill. After that you must enter the room of spirits in which live two hundred black spirits. They will try to stop you from entering the next room, in which the princess and her nurse are kept prisoners."

Prince Osnofla's cheek was flushed with pleasure, his eyes beamed with delight, and it was with great pains that he remained silent until Fairy Violet ceased speaking. Now he cried as he made as though to leave his bed:

"How kind you are to offer me the task of saving the princess. Let me go at once."

But Fairy Violet detained him by saying:

"Do not be in such a hurry, noble prince. The night is too far advanced for you to go. You must wait until to-morrow."

"Very well, but how will I find the enchanted castle."

"I was just going to give you my instruc-

tions;" as she thus spoke she took a large double violet from the garlands which trimmed her dress and handing it to the prince, said: "Put this violet under your pillow to-morrow night when you go to bed, saying that you wish to find yourself in the enchanted forest at midnight. This," giving him the sword, "is the only weapon you will need to defend yourself against the monsters you will encounter."

She then told him the magic words he must pronounce to chase the spirits from the spirit room and also those which would open the castle door. Then she continued:

"The danger against which you will suffer the most, will be the desire to drink, to which you must not yield under any circumstance. No matter if you feel yourself dying of thirst and you see clear water before you, you must not taste of it, for it would put you to sleep for fifty years and Princess Olga would be compelled to wait that length of time for your coming."

As she said these last words Fairy Violet touched Prince Osnofla's eyes with her wand and he fell asleep. She then hastened to the window and disappeared into the night. The next morning when the young prince awoke, he thought he had a queer dream, but when he saw the gold sword on the bed and in his hand the sweet scented violet, he saw that it was not a dream and he felt overjoyed at the thought of the dangers of the coming night.

During the day he was very restless and his loving mother, fearing he was sick, had the court physician called, but he said there was nothing the matter with the prince. He went to bed

early and taking the violet and the magic sword from the place where he had concealed them during the day, put the violet under his pillow, saying he wished to be at midnight in the enchanted forest. He then went to sleep.

All at once he awoke with a start. He was no longer in his bed, for on every side he was surrounded by tall trees whose overhanging branches almost touched his head. The night was dark and the thick leaves above so concealed the sky that not a star was visible. From all sides came whispering voices, while from time to time a shrill, wild laugh would make the answering echoes tremble. In spite of all these unseen dangers he was not afraid; his courageous heart did not even tremble.

"I am in the enchanted forest," he thought. "Princess Olga is not far from me. I must hasten to her rescue."

He felt to see if the magic sword was at his side, and when he saw he had it, he began to walk bravely onward. All at once he stumbled over something on the road and fell his full length on the soft, damp ground. He was rising to his feet and was going to resume his walk, when he heard a terrible voice behind him saying:

"Who are you who dare enter my forest? Do you not know that all who enter it die?"

Prince Osnofla drew his sword as he turned to see who thus addressed him, but the night was so dark that all he could see was two fiery eyes which glared at him from the darkness. Suddenly, however, the whole forest became lighted by a bright violet light and Prince Osnofla

saw only a few feet from him a great deformed creature that was neither man nor beast. The Prince looked him boldly in the face, then said without emotion:

"I am Prince Osnofla and I come here to save the captive Princess Olga."

He had scarcely uttered these words when the creature gave a shrill whistle, and an instant later the young prince found himself surrounded by bears, wolves, wildcats and snakes who snarled and glared meaningly at him. He felt that he was lost, but he decided to sell his life dearly. So raising his sword above his head he cried:

"Withdraw or I kill you without pity."

He threw himself upon the deformed creature and plunged his sword into its yielding body. With a great cry that caused the trees and neighboring mountains to shake as though about to fall, the creature dropped to the ground and after a few struggles it remained quite still; it was dead.

Encouraged by his success he turned to combat the other beasts that had surrounded him, but they had disappeared and he was once more alone.

Surprised and pleased by this success he resumed his walk. Soon a maddening thirst seized him. On all sides he heard the bubbling of fresh spring water but remembering the Fairy's warning he walked bravely onward. His thirst, however, became so intense that his tongue began to swell and his throat seemed to be on fire. At last his suffering became so great that he was forced to pause. A feeling of despair seized his

heart for he felt that unless something came to his aid he would never be able to reach the end of his journey. At that moment a few drops of rain fell on his hot brow, and a voice like the one he had heard the night before said close to him:

"Raise your head and drink the rain the Fairy Queen sends to relieve your thirst."

Looking around him, he saw no one, but as he recognized the voice, he obeyed. After being refreshed by the rain which he drank in so eagerly, he walked rapidly on, and a few minutes later he paused before the moat that surrounded the castle and in which flowed such dangerous poison. When he reached it, he paused and began to wonder how he could swim across it without drinking one drop of the deadly water. While he was thus thinking, the same voice that had spoken to him in the forest now said:

"Lay your sword across and pass over on its blade."

Once more he looked around but he still saw no one; yet as his thirst had been so promptly relieved by the cool rain, he decided to obey without hesitation; so he put his sword on the bank. Scarcely had he done so than he saw it become broader and longer until it touched the other side and thus made an excellent bridge over which to pass. Without hesitation he passed over the sword and when he reached the other side he drew in the sword, which after he had touched it became smaller and smaller until it had resumed its natural size.

Prince Osnofla now walked bravely to the door in the wall and knocking, said:

"Open, it is I, Prince Osnofla."

The door opened with a crash and he saw before him the most hideous dwarf he had ever seen.

"What do you want?" asked the dwarf, sparks and flames escaping his mouth at every word he spoke.

"I come to save Princess Olga, and you must let me pass or I will kill you."

The dwarf began to dance around the prince; at the same time he tried to close the door, but Osnofla reading his evil thoughts pushed him rudely aside and entered the castle walls. The dwarf now became so angry that he leaped upon the prince, but Osnofla struck him three times in the bosom and pierced his three hearts, so that the dwarf dropped dead at his feet.

Without looking back on the evil creature he had just killed, he hurried down a broad avenue of trees which led to the castle. He was walking so fast that at first he did not notice that the trees seemed to get closer together, the avenue become narrower, while now the branches touched his head and struck him cruel blows in the face. All at once he was compelled to pause, for he found himself in such a maze of branches, trunks and vines, that he was unable to walk farther. He then remembered what Fairy Violet had told him about the enchanted trees. He was wondering what he was going to do, when the voice said once more:

"Use your magic sword."

He drew it and began cutting away some of the branches that stood in his way. To his great surprise the branches dropped almost before he touched them, while the avenue became

broader and broader until it was as wide as it had been when he had first entered it.

Prince Osnofla soon found himself before the castle door. He was going to say the magic words by which to force it open, when with an angry snarl a huge she-bear leaped upon him and knocked him down against the hard pavement. He had just time to seize his sword so that when the bear leaped upon him again he struck her a blow in the region of the heart and with a wail she rolled over dead.

The young prince rose to his feet feeling a little dazed by his fall; then going to the door, he ordered:

"I come not for harm,
So open you must
As I know the charm,
'That'll turn you to dust."

The door opened and he found himself in a large room through which fluttered small, black-winged spirits with hideous heads and only black hearts as bodies. The room was dirty and full of spiders, the furniture was soiled, while the curtains were full of holes. When the black spirits saw Osnofla enter, they rushed to meet him but brandishing his sword high in the air, he cried:

"Dark Spirits, with hearts of black,
Hence—depart into the night,
For ere day break I must be back
With my princess—my heart's delight."

With great flutter of wings and many shrieks of terror the black spirits rushed from the windows and were soon lost into the night. With a wildly beating heart he opened the door which led to the next room, and entered.

The walls were of solid gold, while the chairs and bed were of silver, the curtains of white silk and the carpet of white velvet with garlands of double violets for a design. Standing in the middle of the room, with her nurse on one side and her fairy god-mother on the other, was the beautiful Princess Olga, herself.

She wore a white silk dress, covered with gold lace and strings of pearls, while her small feet were shod with tiny gold slippers with diamond buckles.

When she saw the Prince enter she gave a cry of wild delight as she rushed to him and threw her arms around his neck, crying:

"Oh, my courageous prince, how glad I am to see you are safe; I so feared for your life. I am glad, so very glad," and she began to dance about the room.

Prince Osnofla was so surprised at the sight of her beauty that it was sometime before he dared speak to her. After a while he overcame his timidity and taking her hand in his, said:

"You are the most beautiful girl I have ever seen and I love you very much. I am too young to marry you now, but when I get big and come into possession of my kingdom and have big mustaches like the officers of my guard, I will come to claim you as my bride. Will you wait for me?"

"Oh, yes," replied Princess Olga, "for I love you very much and I feel I can never love anyone else."

They would have talked much longer but Fairy Violet interrupted them by saying:

"My dear children we must hasten from

here for the bad fairies will try to make trouble. I will escort you back to Prince Osnofla's home, then I shall leave you. To-morrow the prince and his mother will start to take you home, Olga."

Before day-break Prince Osnofla and Princess Olga were safely within the palace walls. When his mother awoke, he told her of the adventures of the night, and though she trembled at the thought of the dangers to which he had been exposed, she was very proud of his courage. Then he introduced Olga and she immediately fell in love with the young princess' beauty and gentleness.

They started out that very morning to take Olga home to her parents, and a week later they arrived at the castle inhabited by Prince Armand and Princess Rhoda. The parents' joy was very great when they saw their child once more, but after the first moment of happiness they thought of calling Celestia, their adopted child, but she was nowhere to be found.

The bad fairies, hearing that Olga was being returned to her parents, had hastened to the castle and had tried to make Celestia follow them, but her heart having become so pure and noble, she refused to obey. Then in a fit of anger Fairy Nux Vomica had touched her with her wand and had changed her into a star.

When the Fairy Queen heard of this she became very sad, but all at once her face brightened and she ordered Orange Flame, who was standing near by:

"Hasten to Celestia, now star of the North, and tell her to come up to the palace door."



"Celestia, I make you Fairy of the stars."

A few minutes later, Celestia was waiting at the palace door. The Fairy Queen came out and touching her with her wand, said:

"Celestia, I make you the Fairy of the Stars, and I give to you the gift of immortality. Now I have a mission to entrust to your care. Every year many lives are lost in vain attempts to discover the North Pole. I desire you to go to see what it contains that I can tell mortals, and thereby save many lives. Now depart. I give you a year to accomplish your mission and when you return your enchantment will cease and you will gain an honored place in my palace."

After expressing her thanks, Celestia departed on her perilous voyage while the Fairy Queen dispatched the Orange Flame to tell Rhoda what had happened.

Prince Armand and his wife were very much pained by this news but they soon consoled themselves in the love of their beautiful daughter. Prince Osnoffa and his mother remained several days as Armand's and Rhoda's guests, then they returned to their home, after receiving the promise that Olga would wait until the young prince came of age that he might return to marry her.

THE ENCHANTED SWAN.

One day the cruel and evil King Alinama II was walking by the side of a river which flowed through the park of his palace. His face was so contracted that he presented a most hideous appearance. He was murmuring beneath his breath:

"I would give half my kingdom that I might make her suffer. She dares marry someone else after I had asked her to become my wife. I must find some means to avenge myself on her."

"Why offer so much when you can gain vengeance for nothing?" said a loud shrill voice behind him.

He turned and saw standing by some hemlocks his gardener had failed to destroy, a dwarfish creature, whose deformed form appeared more marked beneath her clinging dress of greenish, hairy material. Her hair, of a dirty white, hung in tangled masses over her shoulders, while her green eyes burned with wicked flames. Around her waist a green snake, spotted with black, was coiled, its forked tongue darting out every minute, and the woman would pat its large flat head with a gentle gesture.

King Alinama II. looked at her with both surprise and disgust, then he asked in his proudest tones:

"Who are you, who thus dare address me, the great and powerful king?"

"I am Fairy Hemlock, and if I thus speak to

you it is because the evil feelings of your jealous heart are in harmony with my own sentiments. You are jealous, so am I; you want vengeance, so do I."

The King became very angry at these words but his anger cooled wonderfully when Fairy Hemlock offered to aid him in his vengeance. After a while he asked:

"You offer your aid, what do you want in exchange?"

Oh, nothing much," she replied, "I only wish to have the right to put a black heart in the place of your red one."

"You are not hard to satisfy if that is all you want. Now what could you do to aid me?"

"You were just saying that you wished Princess Lillian—."

"Lillian! Who told you her name?"

"No one, for I can read the past, the present and the future and nothing is concealed from my eyes. If you would only listen to my advice you would soon see what terrible vengeance you could gain over that proud girl."

"Well what can you do?"

"I could cause her to become insane on her wedding day."

"Insane, how could you do it?"

The fairy drew close to the King and in very low tones told him her plan. As he listened his evil face beamed with joy, and when she ceased he cried as he clasped her hand in his:

"Your plan is so good that it is indeed worth half of my kingdom. You merit more than what you have asked."

"If you wish to give me more than your crim-

son heart, I should like to have possession of all the ruined castles in your kingdom for I wish to enchant them."

"You can have them all and more too if you desire it. Now what must I do?"

"Nothing, I shall do all the work," and Fairy Hemlock disappeared leaving King Alinama II greatly surprised.

Two weeks later invitations were sent by Lillian's parents, to all the kings and princes in the world, that they might come to their daughter's wedding. The only king who was not invited was the jealous King Alinama II who had been so angry when he had been refused. His rage was so great when he saw that he had not been invited, that he was sick for over a week. It was only after Fairy Hemlock promised him that the bride would become insane on her wedding day, that he began to feel better.

The wedding day arrived at last and all nature seemed to have a holiday dress in honor of the beautiful Princess Lillian's marriage. Though the Fairy Queen had been invited, she had been compelled to refuse; but had sent Fairy Lily-of-the-Valley in her place, as she was Lillian's godmother.

The palace was filled with guests, who were assembled in the large reception hall where the wedding was to take place. Its walls were richly decorated with white silk hangings covered with garlands of Lilies-of-the-Valley. Beneath a huge bell of solid gold stood the minister in a white surplice.

The doors were now thrown open and the bride and groom entered followed by Fairy Lily-

of-the-Valley as bride's maid and the Rainbow Flame as groom's man.

Princess Lillian wore a white brocade dress, covered with lace, the design of which was marked by shining pearls. Here and there upon the dress were small clusters of lilies-of-the-valley, held in place by diamond pins. Her head was covered by a long tulle veil and a wreath of flowers.

Fairy Lily-of-the-Valley, who followed the beautiful bride, was also very much admired. Her dress was of pale blue satin trimmed with silver fringes and bouquets of lilies-of-the-valley, while from her tall pointed hat floated a white veil.

The bride and groom took their places before the minister and he was about to speak the binding words when Lillian dropped fainting to the floor. Fairy Hemlock disguised as a servant, now rushed in the room holding a small pitcher of water in her hands. Lillian was forced to drink a little of the liquid it contained, but scarcely had she tasted of it than with a wild shriek she leaped to her feet, and bursting into a shrill wild laugh, she rushed through the astonished guests, ran through the garden and into the park and only paused when she found herself by the border of a small lake. She looked at the shining water for an instant, then with a terrible cry, leaped into the lake.

Fairy Lily-of-the-Valley, who had been running after Lillian, now came up to the lake, and raising her wand above the greenish waters ordered:

"Water-spirits, turn the insane princess into a swan."

She had scarcely finished speaking when a



She rushed through the garden and into the park and only paused when she found herself by the border of a small lake.

white swan appeared on the troubled surface of the little lake and swam majestically toward her. It opened its bill and tried to speak but only a discordant sound came from it.

"Alas," thought Fairy Lily-of-the-Valley sadly: "I forgot to leave her the power of speech."

At that moment the Rainbow Flame appeared and giving her the Queen's wand, said:

"The Fairy Queen thought you might need this and she sent it to you by me."

Thanking the Flame, Fairy Lily-of-the-Valley took the wand and touched one of the swan's white wings, saying:

"During the term of your enchantment you will retain the power of speech."

The Swan now said:

"Dear godmother would you hasten to Prince Albert and tell him what has become of me. He must have a bad opinion of my conduct, but as I drank the water the servant gave me a queer feeling stole all over my body. It seemed as though my head was bursting, then all at once my father's guests, even my dear prince seemed to become monstrous creatures with frightful looking faces. I ran away from them but when I saw the water of the lake, I thought I was a fish and I leaped in. I would surely have drowned had you not turned me into a swan."

Then as her voice became pleading, she asked: "Must I always remain a swan, dear fairy?"

"Certainly not. You will be a swan until—"

"Until," broke in Fairy Hemlock with her evil laugh, "until your prince will get the magic pearl from the bottom of the sea and put it around your neck."

Fairy Hemlock had kept herself concealed until Fairy Lily-of-the Valley had exhausted the power of the Queen's wand, then she had come forward knowing well that Lily-of-the-Valley had no more power.

"Ah, my fair sister," she laughed, "you didn't expect to see me, did you? Well, you see, I am not so foolish as the other bad fairies, for I waited until you had exhausted all your magic power before I spoke. Now you can not save your dear godchild from the cruel fate of remaining a swan the rest of her life."

"You are mistaken," replied Fairy-Lily-of-the Valley, sadly. "I still have the power to aid Prince Albert to recover the magic pearl."

"I hope he'll enjoy himself; only let me warn you that the Black Emperor and his followers will do all in their power to make his journey as unpleasant and dangerous as possible." Then with another evil laugh Fairy Hemlock disappeared.

Turning to the swan, Lily-of-the-Valley said:

"Have no fear, Prince Albert is brave enough to get the magic pearl. Until then you must bear your painful position with courage, for Prince Albert will not be able to see you before he departs. I will leave Rainbow Flame to take care of you and cheer you in your sorrow, while I will protect Prince Albert. So now farewell until we meet again," and with these words Fairy Lily-of-the-Valley left her.

Half way to the palace she met the King and Queen with Prince Albert and a large number of guests. In a few words the fairy informed them of what had happened and after consoling the

unfortunate parents as best she could, she called Prince Albert aside and said to him:

"If you truly love Princess Lillian and wish to have her restored to her former shape, I can tell you the means of doing so."

"Oh, kind fairy," he cried as he dropped on his knees before her and seized her hands in his; "I am willing to do anything to save my dear Lillian. Oh tell me what to do."

"If you wish to see Lillian resume her former shape, you must get for her the magic pearl which now lies in the bottom of the sea, and which alone has the power to change the White Swan into a woman."

"I am ready to brave any danger for her sake; now what must I do?"

"For the present you can do nothing. Only to-morrow at midnight, you must meet me at the chalk cliff by the sea and there I will tell you what to do, for I must first consult with the Fairy Queen."

"I shall be there at the appointed hour; meanwhile I will spend the remainder of this fatal day with my dear princess."

"That, alas, is a joy I must deny you, as it is part of the trial imposed upon your courage not to see her again until you can bring with you the magic pearl."

"Your will be done, oh fairy. I obey and to-morrow at midnight, I shall be at the appointed place."

He departed, his whole attitude denoting the most profound sorrow and discouragement. Fairy Lily-of-the-Valley waited until he had disappeared, then she called a Robin Redbreast to

her and ordered him to take her to the Fairy Palace in the clouds.

Long before midnight—the following evening, Prince Albert was walking up and down the top of the chalk cliff. At last with a slight flutter of wings a robin alighted at his feet and Fairy Lily-of-the-Valley stood before him.

“At last!” he cried. “I thought you would never come.”

“It is just midnight, I am not late.”

“Pardon my impatience, dear fairy, but the thought of Lillian’s enchantment is so painful to bear, that I am in a great hurry to see her delivered.”

“I am not surprised, dear prince, for I am as impatient as you are to see Lillian resume her former self. Now listen to my instructions.”

While she spoke she unfastened a small gold jug which hung from her silver belt. Giving it to the prince, she said:

“After I have told you all you must do, you must drink what this jug contains and you will find yourself turned into a fish. When you find yourself in the sea, you will be surrounded by a large number of water-spirits who will try to make you speak, but though you still have the power of speech, you must on no account answer them and must try to act like the other fishes around you so as not to arouse their suspicions.

“After awhile the water-spirits will leave you. You must then swim rapidly toward the middle of the ocean, being careful to look around you in all directions that you may see any of the good water fairies who might chance to pass by you. When you do see one you must ask her for

the magic pearl which one day dropped from the belt of my beloved Queen, and she will tell you what to do to recover it. You must, however, be very certain before you address any fairy, that she belongs to the good fairies of the sea, for if you happened to ask a bad water-fairy for the pearl she would deceive you and it would be years before you would be able to recover it."

"How can I tell a bad fairy from a good one? Where does the difference lie?"

"There is but a slight difference between them and that lies in the color of their hair. The good fairies have hair of a beautiful gold tint while the bad fairies' is of a light green. Yet at times when the waves play with their hair, it is very difficult to see if the color is gold or green."

"What must I say when I meet a good water-fairy?"

"You must say to her:

"Oh fairy of the mighty deep
Your aid and blessing I implore,
To find the pearl for which we weep,
The magic pearl of mystic lore.

"By these words the fairy will see that you are a messenger from the Fairy Queen and she will aid you. When you have found the pearl, you will be taken to the Water Queen who will give you a jug like the one you now hold. It will contain the fluid that will turn you into a man once more. That is all I have to say to you and I hope that before long I will be able to welcome your return to earth."

Prince Albert thanked her for the aid she had given him, then after begging her to take good care of his unfortunate princess, he opened the

jug and drank the liquid it contained. As he drank, his form changed, his arms became fins, his legs united and formed a tail, his body became covered with scales, his head grew long and slim, his eyes took a fishy stare; and crying a merry goodbye to the fairy, Prince Albert leaped into the sea. He had become a huge cod-fish.

"He began to swim, descending almost to the bottom of the ocean, his eyes wide open to see the strange sights that greeted him on every side. Not far from him was a ship, and playing on the broken masts or dancing on the deck were small elf-like creatures in floating white garments and having small, transparent wings. When they saw the fish, they abandoned their sports, and forming a circle around him they cried:

"A new cod, a mortal turned to a fish. Oh fair being speak to us, tell us of the bright world above from which comes the sailors, the poor drowned sailors which turn into water-spirits, bright spirits like us."

But the fish swam on without heeding their cries, and after pursuing him for some time, they returned to their home in the ship, singing in their strange, wild voices:

"He is not a mortal, he is only a fish, a mean, clammy fish and we'll not turn him into a water-spirit, a bright spirit like us."

When Prince Albert heard these words, he understood why Lily-of-the Valley had warned him against answering the water-spirits. So he swam on, often greatly frightened by the huge monsters, the hideous beings that peopled the sea.

At last, with a start of surprise, he saw a water-fairy. She was riding a water-horse, and

as she looked at him, she smiled in such a strange, alluring way, that he felt his heart beat faster. He was just going to speak to her, when with a start of terror, he discovered that her hair was of a bright green tint.

"A bad fairy," he thought with a shudder. "I came so near speaking to her."

He was swimming rapidly past the fairy when she cried to him in her sweet, strange voice:

"Your eyes are too bright for those of a fish, and it seems to me that a mortal is looking at me. Oh come with me, fair being from earth, and I'll take you to my queen, my beautiful fairy queen, who will tell you where lies the pearl, the beautiful magic pearl that you seek."

These words filled Prince Albert with surprise, still he did not speak; he only thought with increasing wonder:

"How does she know that I came to find the magic pearl?"

As though in answer to his thoughts, the fairy continued in her strange language:

"We've received a message from earth, that a mortal turned to a fish, perchance a cod or a whale or a seal, would come for the pearl, the magic pearl, lost by the queen, the beautiful, fairy queen!

For a long time the fairy followed the fish, singing her deceitful song and trying to lure him by her beauty and her evil charms. But the thought that his beautiful Lillian was waiting for him, gave to Prince Albert the courage to withstand her dangerous attractions. There was in her unusual language such soothing charm that it resembled the soft purring of the

waves as they washed themselves on the sandy shores.

After a while the fairy left him, believing she had been mistaken in taking him for a mortal. He swam all night and toward morning he began to feel the water becoming warmer, while the animals and fishes that surrounded him had different forms and habits. During the night he had encountered several bad fairies, but as yet he had not seen one of the beautiful gold haired creatures of whom Fairy-Lily-of-the Valley had spoken.

He was beginning to despair to meet one of the good water-fairies, when all at once he saw a wonderful gold-haired creature with a face of such wild beauty, that for awhile he was unable to move. She was standing on a small coral reef and was looking around her as though seeking for some one.

Her dress was made of different colored sea-weeds, varying from the palest pink to the brightest green, from the softest brown to the darkest crimson; and clinging to the floating sea-weeds were bright, queer shaped shells such as are never found on the sea shore. Her face was turned toward him and it shone with such a light that the darkness of the ocean was dispersed for many yards around her.

His surprise and admiration was so great that it was sometime before he could remember the words with which he was to address her. After a while he became used to her magic beauty and drawing nearer he repeated the verse Fairy Lily-of-the-Valley had taught him.

The Water-Fairy started when she heard it,

and looked at him with surprise mingled with curiosity; then she asked in the sweetest, softest voice he had ever heard:

"Are you the mortal turned to a fish for whom I have waited—yes waited so long that I thought you had died—yes died on your journey to me."

There was in her words the same purring sound as had surprised him in the bad fairy, and he now began to understand that it must be the custom in the ocean to repeat the same word over several times.

"Yes, I was turned into a fish that I might recover the magic pearl which alone can save my bride, the enchanted White Swan."

"Ah, the swan, the bright swan, the pretty white swan that lives on the lake. And you want my aid, my powerful aid for the recovery of the pearl?"

"Will you not help me, dear Fairy —. Alas I do not know your name."

"I'm named Fairy Seaweed, as all who know me, can tell. And I will aid you mortal, handsome mortal, from the earth."

"How did you know that I was coming for the pearl?"

"In our coral palace one night, at eight, as we sat at the table in a banquet so gay, a flame in purple dress came to our queen and spoke of your coming for the pearl, the magic pearl of the sea."

"You were to tell me what to do. Where is the pearl?" he questioned eagerly for he was impatient to release Lillian from her enchantment.

"The pearl," she said, "is within an oyster bright that lives in the depth of a cave in a

cliff by the land, in the south of the world."

"How can I find this cave?"

"Wait and ye shall see;" then she called, "Starfish, bright Starfish come to me."

An instant later a starfish rested at her feet; she said to it:

"Show to this mortal, now turned to a fish, where lies the cave where lives the oyster that guards the pearl."

Then turning to the prince, she continued:

"The oyster you'll find will be closed and you cannot open it unless you pronounce the magic word of 'Eurp.' Forget it not, oh mortal weak, for never would the oyster open without it. In its side, the pearl you will find and you'll also get a guide to lead to our queen, our beautiful queen, who will give you the jug that contains the fluid that will turn you to man. And now farewell until we meet again."

The prince and the starfish departed and after swimming many hours they arrived at the cliff. The starfish paused and pointing to a small round hole in the rock, said:

"It's there that you'll find the oyster bright that guards the pearl, the magic pearl of the sea."

Without hesitation the prince entered the cave. The darkness was so great that at first he could not see a thing, but after awhile he grew accustomed to the darkness and he saw an immense shell resembling that of a monstrous oyster clinging to the bottom of the rocky cave. He descended to it and in a trembling voice pronounced the magic word:

"Eurp."

The shell opened and he was blinded by the

bright ray of light which came from the oyster and which lighted the cave as by sunlight. After the first moment of surprise had passed, he noticed for the first time that the cave was lined with precious gems of all sizes and varieties, which glittered with a blinding glare. He would have remained long lost in admiration and wonder, but he was recalled to himself by the sound of a soft, sad voice which asked:

"What do you want? Oh, why wake me from my repose, my peaceful repose?"

Moved by those accents of resigned sorrow, Prince Albert said in pitying tones:

"I come for the magic pearl which you guard in your side."

"The pearl," cried the oyster with wild accents of delight, "the pearl for whose sake I was forced to remain in this cave, this black lonely cave. We kept it here that none but the Fairy Queen, the beautiful Fairy Queen might get it. Oh, take it quick, for I long to resume my former liberty."

Surprised by the excitement his words had caused, Prince Albert was sometime before obeying the oyster's order, but remembering that Lillian was waiting for him, he began to search amid the tender flesh of the oyster, until at last he found the pearl. He pulled it out with his fin which he used as a hand, then fearing to lose it he put it in his mouth. Just as he took away the pearl, the oyster with many sparks of colored lights, burst open and a beautiful fairy with long gold hair and a dress of shining mother-of-pearl gauze, stood before him. At her sight he moved away in affright, but in her softest voice the fairy said:

"Be not frightened, oh noble Prince, for I will not harm you. I am Fairy Shell and for fifty years, yes, fifty long years, I have consented to remain within that shell that I might guard the pearl, the magic pearl, that the Fairy Queen of the sky had dropped one day as she was sailing, lightly sailing over the sea. You have rescued me; now what can I do to prove my thanks, my grateful thanks?"

"Take me to your Queen for I have been told that she would give me a jug, the liquid of which will turn me into a man once more."

"Very well, follow me," and she bounded out of the cave.

Once out into the open sea, Fairy Shell became so intoxicated with her newly acquired liberty, that she began to dance and skip about, singing sweet, wild songs of surprising melody. She was so happy that she forgot the unfortunate Prince Albert, who looked at her with wonder and dread combined. At last she remembered him and pausing in her play, cried:

"I implore your pardon, oh mortal fair, now turned to a fish; but I was so happy, so happy to be free, that I forgot, yes, forgot that you were impatient to return to earth. I will now show you the way to my queen, my beautiful fairy queen!"

It took them many days before they reached the Fairy Palace of the sea, for Fairy Shell found many acquaintances with whom she paused to talk; she danced and sang so much that she became tired and was often forced to rest. Though Prince Albert was very impatient to arrive at the palace, he was afraid to say anything to the

fairy for fear of arousing her anger. At last they arrived before the gates of the immense coral wall which surrounds the Fairy Palace of the sea. A white-robed dwarf, in the ocean called Legna, guarded the gates. Fairy Shell gave the password and she and the fish were admitted.

The Palace was built of pink coral and extended to the top of the ocean where its roof is covered with trees and plants, thus causing ignorant mortals to call it a coral island. Behind the transparent glass of the many windows peeped many sweet-faced fairies, who looked in wonder on the fish and his companion as they entered the gate.

Before the palace door, Fairy Shell paused and said to the fish:

"I must enter alone, dear prince, fair prince of the earth, but who now, turned to a fish, cannot live in our palace, our beautiful palace, for there is no water in it, no bright green water in which you could swim and breathe. But I'll tell the Water Queen, the beautiful Queen of the Sea, and she'll come to you to give you the jug that contains the fluid that will turn you to man.

With these words the Fairy entered the palace. After what seemed to Prince Albert a very long time, the door opened again and the Fairy Queen herself appeared before the dazzled prince.

She wore a dress of heavy coral-tinted silk such as is never seen on earth, for it was woven by the magic looms of the water fairies who use the thread of the silk worms of the sea. It had a train which extended several yards behind her and which was upheld by two baby Legnas. The whole dress was embroidered with diamonds

and pearls. Her crown was made from an elegantly carved pearl of an immense size. In the center of the crown was one large diamond, on each side of which were two large blood-red rubies. She held a gold wand in one hand while in the other was a small gold jug. She bowed, then said:

"You must be impatient, fair mortal turned to a fish, to return to your princess, your beautiful princess now turned to a swan, so I will not keep you long. Here is the jug, the precious jug which contains the fluid with which we aid mortals, poor enchanted mortals to return to earth in their former shape. An escort of three fairies to thee, I'll give, that they may show you the shortest road to the shore, the sandy, earthly shore. Before you go, a message I must give for the Fairy Queen, the beautiful queen of earth. Will you give it to her?"

"I shall," was all the prince could say, surprised as he was by the strange beauty and still stranger language of the Water Queen.

The Queen drew a ring from her finger and giving it to the prince, said:

"Tell the Fairy Queen of earth, that in two years, short fleeting years, I wish to have her and her subjects come to my reception, which I give every thousand years. This ring, this magic ring of mine contains the charm that will turn them into water fairies, bright fairies like us. Now go, and may you be as happy as mortals, poor mortals, can be."

Before he had time to thank the Fairy Queen, she had disappeared and he only saw three water fairies by his side. They said that they were to escort him to the shore.

The return journey was made very rapidly and before the week was over Prince Albert found himself by the chalk cliff over which he had leaped three months before. Thanking the fairies for their aid, he drank the liquid contained in the jug given him by the Water Queen, then with a great thrill of joy, he found that he was once more a man. He swam rapidly to the shore and was greeted by Fairy Lily-of-the-Valley who had been waiting for him every night since his departure.

He asked about Lillian and was pleased to hear that she was well, though somewhat sad. He then gave the ring given him by the Water Queen, delivering her message for the Fairy Queen at the same time. Fairy Lily-of-the-Valley gave an exclamation of pleased surprise, then she cried as she clasped her hands in wild delight:

"An invitation from the Water Queen! oh what happiness! I do hope my beloved Queen will let me go with her;" then noting the young prince's impatience she said, "Come let us hasten to Lillian."

It was day-break when they reached the Palace. They were greeted by the King and the Queen, who had been told of their coming by the Rainbow Flame. They went at once to the lake, and calling the White Swan to the shore, Prince Albert placed a necklace in which was placed the magic pearl, around the Swan's neck. An instant later Lillian stood on the shore in her bridal robes, while around her neck glittered a necklace of rare pearls in the center of which shone the magic pearl of the sea. It was the wedding-gift of the water fairies.

Prince Albert and Lillian were married that

very day and they were very happy forever after that.

As to the evil King Alinama II, who with the aid of Fairy Hemlock had worked so much harm, his crimson heart was taken from him and the bad faries gave him a black one in exchange. Now the bad instincts of that black heart were so powerful that he began a long career of murder and crime. After a while, his conduct was so cruel and mean that he was named "The King of Terror."

DEMI-KING.

The courtiers were assembled around King Alinama II, better known as the King of Terror. All the courtiers' faces were pale, while many in their midst were trembling with fear. The King looked around him, his cruel evil eyes filled with menace and his lips parted in a fierce smile, which showed his long sharp teeth which resembled those of a wolf. Beside him, seated on a smaller throne than his immense gold one, was a deformed creature with such a hideous face that one trembled to look at her. Her dress, of a dirty, smoky looking material was decorated with living vipers, which in their coiling play continually changed the design of the trimming. Her long tangled hair was of a soiled white tint, and when she spoke, clouds of bluish smoke came from her toothless jaw.

The King turned to her saying:

"What orders shall I give to-day, dear Fairy Lobelia? Do you know of any more towns we could have burned, or of any women and children we could have put to death? Come, speak out, dear fairy, you know I always follow your advice."

The fairy gave a shrill, wild laugh, then she replied:

"Such a handsome King as you should have a wife, the most beautiful wife the world can afford. Eh, what say you?"

"You are right, Lobelia. You whose Emperor has a hundred eyes will surely be able to tell me where I can find this beautiful girl?"

Fairy Lobelia raised her skinny hand and pointing to a young prince who stood amid the courtiers, she said:

"Ask him! He knows where lives the most beautiful girl in the world, the lovely Armenian he saved from a burning village after you had ordered that all the inhabitants were to perish."

A terrible frown gathered on King Alinama II's brow, and in a thundering voice he ordered:

"Prince Ali, advance and tell me where lives this beautiful girl, whose life you dared save after I had ordered that all should die. If her beauty pleases me I will keep her as my wife; if not, both she and you will die."

The young prince did not move. His face was very pale yet nothing in his attitude denoted that he was afraid. Seeing that he did not answer, the King became angry and cried:

"Will you answer me, or must I have my guards use the whip to force you to speak?"

Prince Ali now advanced up to the throne, and looking King Alinama II full in the face, he said slowly:

"You were once a good and noble king, beloved by all your subjects, admired by all nations. Now you have become the most depraved of beings, the cruelest and most unjust of kings. Though you still have a human form, your heart is that of a demon's. My beloved sister, Bianca, whom I saved from the flames of the burning village where so many innocents perished, is indeed the most beautiful girl on earth. But she is

too good for such as you; why, rather than see her become your wife, I would strike her dead at my feet. You need not think that I would reveal to you the place where she is concealed."

A murmur of surprise and fear mingled with admiration, ran among the assembled courtiers. The King rose from his seat, his face was purple with rage, a pink foam bordered his lips, his eyes were partly out of their sockets. He stood still for a few minutes, then dropping back upon the throne he gave an evil smile as he asked Fairy Lobelia:

"What must I do with that madman? Shall I have him whipped until he drops dead or must he be burnt to death?"

"Neither," laughed Lobelia, "for what is a few hours of suffering from which death soon relieves one. Would it not be better to change him into a snake, and as the most despised of reptiles let him live for years to suffer and regret?"

"You are right, Fairy Lobelia, you are always right. It is going to be fine sport to see a prince become a snake. Ha, ha, ha, what fun. Come, hurry, Lobelia, I am anxious to see what sort of a figure he'll cut when he becomes a snake."

Lobelia rose and touching the unfortunate Prince Ali with her wand, said:

"Become a snake, and live thus forever."

"No, not forever," broke in a voice from behind, "for the day the good fairies can take from yonder evil King his cruel black heart and replace it by a crimson one, that day Prince Ali will be saved from his enchantment."

The prince, now turned into a small blackish snake, drew near to the one who had just spoken

and in a few sad words he thanked her for her kindness. Then coiling amid the frightened courtiers, he passed from the room and was soon lost in the grass of the garden.

The one who had just saved Prince Ali from an eternal enchantment was Fairy Forget-me-not; who for many days had been watching over the palace where she knew Fairy Lobelia reigned as mistress.

She wore a dress of pale pink velvet trimmed with creamy lace, which at short intervals was looped by diamond pins and small sprays of forget-me-nots. On her golden hair was placed the tall pointed hat worn by all the good fairies and from which floated a pale blue veil of shining gauze. Around her waist was a gold belt from which hung long strings of sapphires, at the end of which were small bouquets of forget-me-nots, held in place by gold clasps inlaid with diamonds. She was accompanied by Blue Flame, who held in his hand the gold wand of the Fairy Queen.

"Lobelia, for a creature as cruel and depraved as you have become, there is but little hope of repentance," said Forget-me-not, addressing the bad fairy. "Bella-donna and Aconite have repented; they therefore will in time recover their former honored place as followers of the good Fairy Queen. For you, alas! I see no hope. Instead of trying to conquer your evil instincts you cause them to become stronger, you aid them to increase in numbers. Meanness, however, has but one recompense, that is suffering and misery. Therefore, Fairy Lobelia, you are accursed?"

Fairy Lobelia turned pale, then with a laugh that sounded forced, said;

"What do I care for the curse of your timid queen? I shall always find happiness in doing wrong."

"You are mistaken," was Fairy Forget-me-not's grave reply; "you will suffer, not through your heart, for you have ceased to have one; but through your pride, through your desire to win friends and your inability to do so."

"I can always win friends, as there will always be evil beings in the world who will love those whose instincts are like theirs."

A sad smile passed over Fairy Forget-me-not's face, as she answered;

"The future will show which of us will be right, and when you feel the pangs of your dissatisfied longings, you will remember my words of to-day."

-Then turning to the King, she said;

"The harm you have done, evil King, has aroused the anger of my noble Queen, and judging your conduct she has sent me to inflict the punishment."

As she spoke she drew near to King Alinama, and touching him with the Queen's wand which she had taken from Blue Flame, she said;

"That you may work less harm on the unfortunate mortals you now govern, I will turn you into a five-year-old boy, but I will leave to your heart the instincts and the ambitions of a man."

The King tried to move away but the wand touched him, and now as he felt himself shrink into a boy he began to utter cries and shrieks, to tear his hair and stamp his feet in powerless rage. The Fairy tried to speak but her voice

was drowned by the noise made by the King. After a while, exhausted by his cries, he dropped back upon the throne, but instead of a strong powerful man, he was only a small undersized boy of five. As he sat there sobbing, Fairy Forget-me-not continued;

"You will remain thus until by your actions you gain the right to grow and become a man once more. For each generous thought, for each noble act, you will grow a sixteenth of an inch, while for every bad one you will become that much smaller, never, however, becoming smaller than you are now."

These words caused a new fit of rage on the part of the boy-king, and with a cry he leaped to his feet and ordered to some soldiers who were standing nearby:

"Kill her, kill that woman, kill that evil witch."

But the soldiers only laughed. They had nothing to fear from this boy, for the King they all dreaded had ceased to exist, and the child who replaced him only excited pity. Maddened by the attitude of the soldiers the boy-king rushed up to one of them and tried to strike him, but he was so small that he could only reach above the knee of the soldier.

"Ah, ah, ah," laughed the courtiers on all sides, "see the dwarf trying to fight the giant; ah, ah, ah!"

The boy-king now became so furious that he turned from one to the other in his powerless rage, calling out his curses, but this only increased the laugh of his followers. At last he turned to Fairy Lobelia crying;

"Why do you stand there idle when you see in what fix I find myself? Don't you see that I want you to change me back into a man? Ah, I see what you want, it is money, lots of money. Oh, I will give you all you ask for, only give me back my lost strength, my lost size."

He was almost pleading as he said this, but Fairy Lobelia's evil heart rejoiced at the sight of his suffering, so did not reply immediately;

"What else do you want?" he continued, not understanding the cause of her silence. "Have I not offered enough? There are no more ruined castles in my kingdom, for I gave them all to Fairy Hemlock, but there are plenty of new ones, and all these you can have. Now will you use your magic power to return to me my manly form?"

"Alas, I can't aid you," at last replied Lobelia in the honeyed accents of pain, "for though the Black Emperor took the Gold Laurel Branch from the good fairies, they still have the Crown of Goodness, and against its power, which becomes greater every day, we have no means to combat."

The boy-king's anger now turned against the bad fairy who refused to aid him in his misfortune. He ordered to have her thrown out of the palace, but as she was feared by all no one dared obey the order, though all longed to do so.

Fairy Forget-me-not, who had remained silent, now said as she turned to Lobelia:

"You had better depart, Fairy Lobelia, for your reign here is at an end. That child, though he has the heart of a man, will not be obeyed by anyone since he is no longer feared. So no mat-

ter how bad may be your advice and how strong his desire to follow it, he will never have the means to do so."

"You are right," replied Fairy Lobelia in her shrill, high voice, "I will therefore depart; only remember, fair sister, that you and your queen will soon hear from me!"

She then departed. Fairy Forget-me-not now turned to an old, white-headed courtier, saying as she pointed to the boy-king:

"That child is too young to govern his kingdom, so until by his good conduct he regains his lost privileges, I appoint you king in his place. I hope you will take good care of the kingdom and will govern it justly."

The old courtier bowed his thanks but the boy-king exclaimed:

"You dare name him king in my place! since when have you become master here?"

"Since the time when by your repeated cruelties you have lost your privileges of king and of man;" then addressing herself to the new king, Fairy Forget-me-not continued; "To-morrow I will send a governess to take care of the boy."

"A governess for me, for me, the king!" And the boy-king filled the room with cries and curses.

The old courtier turned to two soldiers and ordered:

"Take the boy to bed, he needs sleep."

The order was obeyed and the two guards carried away the boy-king in spite of his struggles and cries.

After giving some more instructions to the new king Fairy Forget-me-not departed.

The courtiers crowded around the new-made

king and expressed their joy at the thought that the reign of terror was at an end and that a new peaceful one was to begin.

The following day the governess, of whom Fairy Forget-me-not had spoken, arrived at the palace and was greeted by the new king, who wondered at the sight of her surprising beauty. After saluting the king, she asked:

"Where is my pupil? The Fairy Queen desires him to be called Demi-King until by his conduct he merits to regain his full title of king."

"He has been kept in his room this afternoon on account of his unruly conduct of this morning."

"What has he done?"

"Seeing that the gardener refused to kill a small black snake that was playing in the rose-bush, and which we recognized as the unfortunate Prince Ali, Demi-King became so angry that he pulled most of the flowers and rare plants that grew in the garden. I then ordered to have him locked in his room."

"You were right to punish him, for the snake he wished to destroy was indeed my unfortunate brother, Prince Ali. Protect him as much as you can from Demi-King or any one else who might desire to harm him. Now take me to my pupil."

The King led the way to Demi-King's apartment but before the door he paused, and giving the key to the governess, said;

"Demi-King becomes so furious when he sees me that I think I had better let you enter alone. Would you object to tell me your name?"

"I am Princess Bianca, the sister of the unfortunate Prince Ali." With these words she unlocked the door and entered Demi-King's apartment.

He was seated on the floor, his clothes partly torn off, while scattered on the floor around him were broken objects of all sorts, which in his powerless rage he had destroyed.

When he saw Bianca enter he rose to his feet and looking at her with admiration, asked;

"Who are you, most beautiful being?"

"I am Bianca, your governess."

"My governess," he cried with rising anger, "I don't need a governess, but if you'll consent to be my wife, I'll marry you at once."

Bianca laughed at this remark, then she answered;

"You are too young to think of marriage; better let me teach you something. What do you know?"

Controlling his anger so as not to appear childish before this beautiful girl, he replied with forced calm:

"I know everything a man and a king should know. Question me and see."

Taking a chair by the window, she motioned to Demi-King to take a seat at her feet. To her surprise, he obeyed. Looking at him with her soft, gentle eyes, she questioned, as a smile played on her lips:

"I am glad to hear you know everything a man and a king should know, for you will be able to answer my first question: Who is God?"

Demi-King hesitated, he asked her to repeat the question, then hanging down his head, he said:

"I do not know of whom you speak, though when I was a child, I think my mother sometimes pronounced that name."

"You do not know who is God, yet you claim that you know all that a man and a king should know!"

Then in her soft, tender voice, Bianca explained to Demi-King the existence of the Almighty Ruler of the world. When she said that God was the King of Kings, Demi-King rose to his feet and demanded angrily:

"Do you mean to say that this God of whom you speak is more powerful than I?"

"He could crush you with a word. He holds in His hands your future destiny. It is He who marks out the day of your birth, the hour of your death!"

As Bianca spoke she became so beautiful that Demi-King felt moved, and questioned her again and again that he might have the pleasure of hearing her speak. After spending several hours in conversation with Demi-King, Bianca rose and said:

"Come, let us go out for a walk, the day is so fine that it is a crime to remain in the house."

They left the room together. In the hall they met with some courtiers who laughed at the sight of their once dreaded King. A sudden fit of madness seized Demi-King and he cried:

"Oh, how I wish I could become strong and large again, I would have these men put to death for daring to laugh at me."

Bianca paused and looking at him said:

"Demi-King, you're becoming smaller."

These words calmed him in an instant, and taking Bianca's hand, he followed her into the garden. As she passed by the destroyed flower beds she said:

"Who could have been so cruel as to destroy all those pretty flowers? What harm could they have done?"

"I pulled them up," replied Demi-King, "because the gardener did not want to kill a black snake that was spoiling my roses."

"The gardener! then why did you pull the flowers, if it was against the gardener that you were angry."

"He was too big for me to fight him and—."

"Ah, Demi-King," reproached Bianca sadly, "that was very unjust of you to make the poor, weak flowers suffer because the real guilty one was too big and strong. If you ever become good and are given the right to govern your kingdom once more, remember that the rights of the weak must be respected as well as those of the powerful."

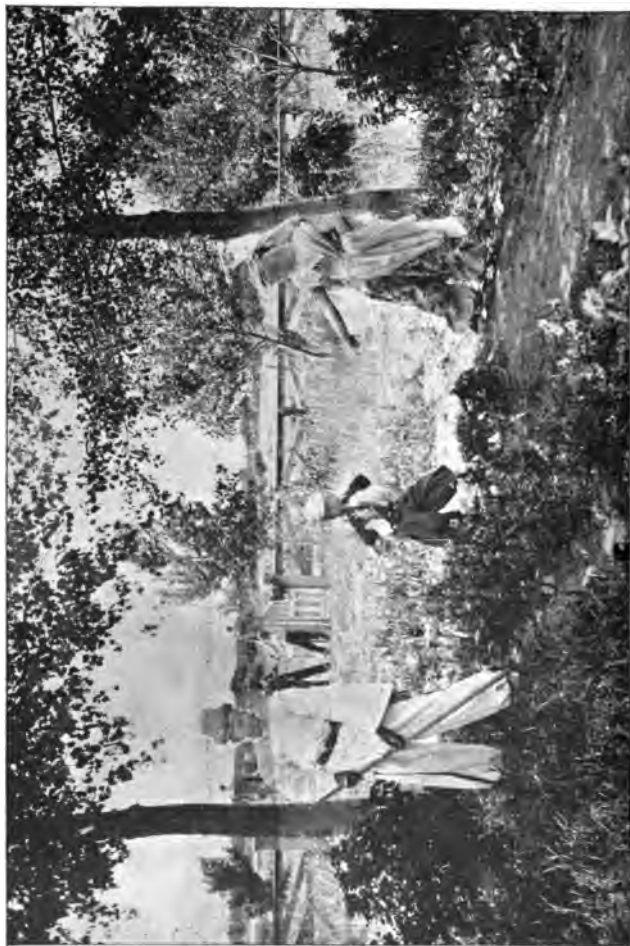
Talking, they had left the garden and now they found themselves in the street. Not far from them was a group of boys. One, a little timid fellow who walked painfully on crutches, was eating with great relish a small slice of cake, as he watched the other boys at their play.

All at once a large boy went up to the cripple and ordered:

"Give me that cake."

The cripple tried to protest, but the larger boy took away the cake, and striking him in the face sent him rolling on the hard pavement.

Bianca and Demi-King had watched this scene, but all at once Demi-King let go of Bianca's hand, and rushing to the large boy, struck the young ruffian with a strength one would not have thought concealed in his small frame. As he did this he grew at least half an inch taller.



"See, Demi-King, the scene we have just witnessed in the street was similar to the one you played this morning."

"I'll teach you," he panted, as he used his fists with excellent advantage, "how to respect the weak and the unhappy."

After he thought he had inflicted enough punishment, he went up to the crippled boy, who still lay on the ground, helped him to rise and handing him his crutches, said, as he gave him some money:

"Here, my poor fellow, take this money and buy more cake."

But the cripple, instead of thanking him, cried as he rushed away as fast as his deformed legs allowed him to:

"My God, he is growing taller and taller."

Demi-King watched him depart, then returning to Bianca, he asked:

"Is it true what the boy has just said, that I am growing tall?"

"Yes, it is true," replied Bianca, as she pressed Demi-King's hand. "You have just acted nobly in taking the defence of the weak, and as you remember Fairy Forget-me-not promised you that by goodness alone could you hope to regain your lost size and strength."

Then with her sweet smile she continued as she led Demi-King back into the garden and showed him the destroyed flower-beds:

"See, Demi-King, the scene we have just witnessed in the street was similar to the one you played this morning. The gardener was stronger than you, so you did not attempt to fight him but attacked the poor defenceless flowers who had done nothing to merit your anger. You were not long to see what was wrong in the conduct of another, yet you failed

to find yourself at fault when you acted as meanly as he."

Demi-King remained some time without answering, then looking up said:

"You are right Bianca. Will you teach me to be good?"

"Certainly, dear Demi-King, only you must promise me to obey my orders and follow my advice."

"I will try to do so, Bianca, but in return you must promise that when by my good conduct I have regained my lost rights, you will marry me."

"I can't promise that, dear Demi-King, for then you might be doing good in order to obtain a reward. Yet when you have become a man once more and my unfortunate brother, Prince Ali, is freed from his enchantment, you can come to me with the same question and I shall then give you an answer."

Just then they found themselves face to face with the new King, who bowing low to Bianca, asked:

"How is the boy behaving this afternoon? Should he trouble you too much, you can call any of the guards and they will soon master him."

Bianca was about to answer when Demi-King, who had stolen behind the new king, had taken away his sword; and before any one had time to stop him, he inflicted a very painful wound upon the king's thigh. As he did so he felt himself become small again. The good action of the street had come to nothing.

"Oh, Demi-King, what have you done?" cried

Bianca, as she called some guards to assist the king back to the palace.

Demi-King was already remorseful, and fearing that his bad conduct might cause Bianca to leave him, seized her by her dress, crying:

"Oh, Bianca, don't leave me, for I can never become good unless you help me to do so."

"I shall not leave you," replied Bianca; "only you must try to become a better boy."

From that day Demi-King began to improve, and though once in a while his evil nature would return, he did more good than wrong, and therefore he began to grow daily in size and in wisdom.

This greatly alarmed the bad fairies for they saw that already one half of his heart was crimson, and if they allowed this to continue he would become so good that Prince Ali would be saved from his enchantment.

Nux Vomica seeing this said to the Black Emperor:

"We must not allow the good fairies to get ahead of us this time, so we must take Demi-King from Bianca's care or take Bianca away from him."

"You are right, Nux Vomica, so I leave this Demi-King to your care."

"Oh, Emperor, you are unjust," cried Fairy Lobelia in anger. "Don't you know that Demi-King belongs to me and——."

"Silence," ordered the Emperor. "Remember that I am master here and that I alone have the right to speak. If I name Nux Vomica in your place it is because her plans are always good, that she has never failed in any of her undertakings, that she alone has done more harm to the

good fairies than all the rest of you put together. Now you know my reasons. I order you, one and all, to obey her as you would me."

Fairy Lobelia was about to retort when all at once Fairy Forget-me-not's words returned to her and she saw that her punishment was about to begin. Nux Vomica now called her, saying:

"Come, follow me, I need your help."

And in spite of her rage, she obeyed because she was afraid to be chased from the Black Empire and she feared that the Fairy Queen would refuse to pardon her.

When they were outside of the volcano, Nux Vomica said:

"You must go to the palace and try to induce Demi-King to follow you. If he refuses you must set fire to his room, then during the confusion place him on the back of your vampire, who will fly with him here; I will take care of him when he arrives, and by placing him with us in the palace we can better see to his education. As to Bianca, you might change her into a snake or an owl, to teach her not to meddle with our affairs."

Fairy Lobelia departed and soon arrived at the palace; Demi-King was in his room asleep. He had already grown to the size of a sixteen-year old youth. Going to the bed she awoke him and said:

"Demi-King, I am sent by the Black Emperor to offer you a kingdom where you can reign as master. You will not have to mind an evil governess like that Bianca."

"Away from here, evil creature," cried Demi-King as he rose from his bed, "I will never listen to anyone who speaks ill of my dear Bianca."

Fairy Lobelia then tried many other ways to win Demi-King's consent, but he would not listen to her. Seeing there was no hope, she went about the room, and touching all the curtains and draperies, she soon had the room filled with smoke and flames; then opening the window she let in the vampire and placing the struggling Demi-King upon his back, she ordered:

"To the Vesuvius, in all haste."

Demi-King tried to jump off, but a power stronger than his will held him in place. He cried and called for help, but the vampire had taken flight and soon his cries were lost in the distance. Fairy Lobelia now turned around to seek Bianca's room, when the door opened and five fairies entered; with the aid of their wands they soon had extinguished the fire. Fairy Forget-me-not then asked of Lobelia:

"What have you done with Demi-King?"

Angered at seeing that the fire she had started had been so quickly extinguished, she turned to Forget-me-not and replied with her evil smile:

"Ah, you think that you could rescue him, but you are mistaken; he is out of your reach since he is under the safe keeping of the Black Emperor, and he, you may be sure, will see that he does not escape."

The good fairies looked at each other in consternation; at that moment Bianca entered the room, asking:

"Where is Demi-King?"

They were going to reply, but Fairy Lobelia, who had been drawing nearer and nearer to Bianca, was going to touch her with her wand when all at once Fairy Forget-me-not cried:

"Fairies, form a circle around Bianca and protect her with your wands. Lobelia wishes to harm her."

In an instant the good fairies had surrounded Bianca. Fairy Lobelia saw with a great feeling of rage, that she would be unable to harm Bianca as Nux Vomica had ordered her to do. She went to the window—but before she disappeared she said to them:

"You can protect her all you please, but you will be powerless to aid Demi-King." With these words she disappeared.

After her departure the fairies got together and Fairy Rose said:

"We surely can't leave Demi-King in the hands of the bad fairies—and their still more cruel Emperor."

"You are right," replied Fairy Apple Blossom. "But what can we do?"

"Alone we can do nothing," was Forget-me-not's reply, "but we must hasten to the Fairy Palace and our Queen will tell us what to do."

"Then let us not lose a minute," urged Fairy Lily-of-the-Valley.

The fairies hastened away, but Fairy Violet lingered behind and said to Bianca, who was weeping bitterly:

"Do not despair, we will soon bring Demi-King back to you;" and with these consoling words she departed.

Meanwhile the vampire had traveled fast, and he now paused at the top of the Vesuvius where Nux Vomica stood waiting for him. She told Demi-King to descend, and calling to her five black dwarfs, ordered them to carry him into

the mountain. When they reached the bottom, she showed him to the Black Emperor and the bad fairies who were assembled there and said:

"Here is our prisoner, and to make sure that he does not escape, we must keep him here."

"You are right," replied the Black Emperor, "and what's more, we must put chains upon him. Give the needed orders, Nux Vomica."

A few moments later, Demi-King was tied in heavy chains and held fast to an immense rock in a dark and distant part of the underground palace of the Black Emperor. Before leaving him Fairy Nux Vomica had told him:

"You will remain a prisoner here until you consent to let us replace the crimson part of your heart for a black one. If you consent to do this you will be given the largest kingdom on earth to govern as you please."

Demi-King remained alone and a great sadness stole over him. The black part of his heart told him to rejoice that before long he would be free to govern a large kingdom as he pleased, but the red portion protested, saying that if he consented to become cruel and mean again, Bianca would hate him, and she would never consent to marry him.

He was thus far in his thoughts when he heard a voice behind him, murmuring in very low tones:

"Do not move, only listen well to what I am going to tell you. I am Fairy Bella-donna, and though I was once a bad fairy, I have repented and my only desire is to please the Fairy Queen, and to win from her my pardon. So listen well to my words. To-night, one of the bad fairies

will bring you some food; make believe you eat of it but do not swallow a bit of it, for it is made with the sap of such plants as will turn a heart from red to black. When the fairies are all asleep I will come with Fairy Aconite and together we will take off your chains and help you to escape."

The voice ceased speaking and when he turned around to see who had spoken, he found himself alone. Nevertheless, when the fairies brought him his meals he made believe he ate of them but he spat out everything after they were gone. All day he waited anxiously for Belladonna to speak to him again but she did not come near him.

About midnight the following evening, as he was falling asleep, some one touched his chains, and an instant later he was free. Fairy Belladonna now said to him, in tones so low that he could scarcely hear her:

"Put on this dress which belongs to Nux Vomica, then follow me. Only on no account whatever must you speak to any one."

He obeyed, and soon he was following Belladonna through the dark passages of the underground palace. They came to a closed door before which they found Fairy Aconite waiting for them.

"Do you know the pass-word?" asked Belladonna to Aconite in low tones.

"Yes, Nux Vomica just told it to the Black Emperor, as she warned him not to let us know."

"Very well, knock and give it to the black dwarf, for we must hasten away before Demi-King's absence is noticed."

Fairy Aconite obeyed. In answer to her

knock, the door was opened, and a black dwarf barred the way saying:

"Who goes there?"

"It's Aconite, Bella-donna and Nux Vomica, who wish to pass," replied Aconite.

"Give the word."

"Noisiop," said the fairies, and the dwarf moved away to let them pass.

After passing two other doors, guarded also by black dwarfs, they came to the stair that led to the top of the mountain, and a few minutes later they reached the top. As they were consulting about what they had better do, Purple Flame began dancing about their heads and he said:

"Descend to the bottom of the mountain, the Fairy Queen is waiting for you."

They hastened to descend, and a few moments later they found themselves face to face with the Fairy Queen, who was there with all her court of good fairies. After greeting them cordially the Fairy Queen said:

"Fairy Bella-donna, and you, Fairy Aconite, the act you have accomplished to-night, gains for you my pardon. Come back to my bosom, my dear wayward daughters, and let me press you to my heart."

An instant later the two fairies lay sobbing in the Fairy Queen's arms, while the other fairies gazed with moist eyes on this touching scene of reconciliation. After the first emotion had passed the Fairy Queen said, as she pushed the forgiven fairies gently from her:

"Alas, I can't take from your plants their poisonous qualities; these must remain, ever to

remind you of your fault; but what I can, and will do, is to teach to mortals how they can use these poisons for the curing of diseases;" and presenting to each a beautiful silver wand, she added: "Take these wands which have been charged from the magic Crown of Goodness. Use them in doing good that we may soon regain our lost Laurel Branch."

After the fairies had thanked her she said, turning to Demi-King:

"Your having refused to give the crimson part of your heart in exchange for your liberty, entitles you to a reward." Giving him a small jug she said: "Drink this."

He drank, and to his intense delight he felt himself grow to his former size. He was going to thank the Fairy Queen when she continued:

"What you have just drunk was the sap of goodness, and from now on you will have none but noble instincts, for your heart is crimson once more. Now return to your kingdom and learn to govern your subjects justly until you become known the world over for your goodness and your generosity."

Demi-King, now a full-grown man, thanked the Queen and hastened to depart, while the Fairy Queen and her court, with Bella-donna and Aconite, returned to the Fairy Palace in the clouds.

The next morning King Alinama II arrived at his palace and found Bianca and Prince Ali, now returned to his former shape, waiting for him. They greeted him with great joy; then they led him into the council room, where the old courtier who had been king during his enchant-

ment, gave up the throne to its legal master. King Alinama named the old courtier his prime-minister. He also offered great dignities to Prince Ali, but he refused, saying:

"During the time I was a snake, I often met with a beautiful young princess. I told her my story and she promised to wait for me until I was disenchanted. I love her very much, and I think she will soon love me in return. So I am going to seek her."

As to Bianca, she married King Alinama II, and they were very happy forever after that. The day after his sister's marriage Prince Ali departed, saying that he would only return when he could bring his beautiful princess home as his bride.

THE BLIND PRINCESS.

After traveling many days, Prince Ali came to the forest where he had met the beautiful princess who had promised to marry him when once he would be freed from his enchantment. It was dark when he reached the forest, and he began to look about him for some shelter for the night. In the distance he saw a bright light, and he said as he walked rapidly toward it:

"It must be some wood-cutter's hut. I will ask him to shelter me for to-night."

But as he neared the light he discovered that it was not a wood-cutter's hut, but a beautiful palace of white marble. He knocked at the garden gate, which was immediately opened by a small man who asked him what he wanted.

"I seek a shelter for the night," replied Prince Ali, as he told the man his name.

The man opened the gate at once, and showing him an avenue of trees, told him that these led to the palace door where he would find a servant who would lead him to Princess Blanche, the mistress of this beautiful home.

Prince Ali soon arrived at the palace door and was shown by the servant into the room called the White Parlor. At first he was so startled by the unusual beauty of this apartment that he did not see Princess Blanche herself, who, seated by the window, was looking at him with both wonder and admiration.

The decorations of the room were of white

and silver. The walls were covered with white silk hangings, on which were embroidered sprays of lilacs; the furniture was of silver, while the white velvet carpet was worked out in designs of lilac-blossoms. The lights were of a beautiful lavender tint, which gave to the whole an unusual aspect.

Princess Blanche now rose to greet him, and going up to the prince offered him her hand, saying:

"Welcome, stranger, to my home. What can I do for you?"

"I came to ask you to shelter me during the night," replied Prince Ali, with great emotion, for he had just recognized in Princess Blanche the beautiful princess he had met, and to whom he had made love when he was an enchanted snake.

"You are welcome to my poor hospitality," was her reply. Then offering him a chair she continued: "Will you not rest until my servants have prepared your room?"

He thanked her and took the offered chair, while Princess Blanche went to give the needed orders.

When she returned Prince Ali dropped on his knees before her and told her that he was no other than the snake she had so often spoken of during his enchantment, and for whom she had promised to wait.

The Princess was delighted, and she said:

"I loved you when you were a snake; I will love you much more now that you have become a handsome prince."

"And will you marry me?" asked Prince Ali, as he caught the Princess' hands.

"Why certainly," she replied, with a happy smile; "I love —."

But here she was interrupted by a shrill, wild laugh; turning they saw a tall, ghostlike creature with a skinless skull, the eyes in which were of live coals. She wore a scarlet dress, dyed with the blood of all the murdered persons in the world, and trimmed with strings of crystallized tears, which had fallen from the eyes of all those she had made unhappy.

She was so terrible to look at that Princess Blanche gave a cry of terror and came very near fainting, while Prince Ali drew his sword so as to protect his fainting princess. But the woman burst into her shrill and hateful laughter as she remarked:

"Your sword is of no use against me, for I am Fairy Nux Vomica," and once more she laughed. Then she continued: "I can't harm you, for having been enchanted once you can't be enchanted again, but your Princess Blanche will be made to feel all my hate against mortals in general, and you in particular;" and with one leap she sprang upon the princess and touching her eyes, she cried: "Be blind forever."

The Princess fainted and Prince Ali was going to leap upon the fairy with his drawn sword, when a sweet voice behind him said:

"Prince Ali, you cannot harm her, for her life is immortal. You must not despair, however, for if you wish you can save Princess Blanche from eternal blindness."

Prince Ali turned around and found himself face to face with Fairy Lilac. Her dress was of woven silver threads, and was trimmed with dia-

monds and lilac branches, while from her tall pointed hat hung a shining veil of bright lavender. When Prince Ali saw her he felt hope return to his heart. She now continued in her sweet, fresh voice:

"I am sorry that I did not arrive in time to save Princess Blanche from the workings of the evil Nux Vomica; but though I can't save her from blindness, I can at least tell you how to restore sight to her eyes."

Fairy Nux Vomica started when she heard these words, then with her evil laugh, she said:

"You seem very sure of what you say, but you seem to forget that a blindness such as now affects Princess Blanche, can never be cured."

Fairy Lilac did not answer this remark; and as Blanche was returning to consciousness, she said to her:

"Do not despair, dear Princess, your blindness will not last long;" and calling a servant she bade her take care of the weeping princess; then beckoning Prince Ali to follow her, she left the room.

Fairy Nux Vomica seeing she could do no more harm, and wishing to hear what Fairy Lilac might say to the prince, also hastened away. Prince Ali alone remained a few minutes behind to bid a tender good-bye to his blind princess, then he also departed. When he had rejoined Fairy Lilac, he asked:

"Fairy Lilac, you gave me hope an instant ago by saying that I might save Princess Blanche from blindness. What must I do? I am ready for any task, no matter how difficult it may be."

"Nux Vomica is listening to us and I will not speak before her. Follow me, however, and you shall soon know."

He obeyed, but after walking some distance, Fairy Lilac turned, and as she touched him with her wand, she said rapidly:

"I order you to turn into a white spirit."

While she spoke Prince Ali felt his body shrink until it became only a foot high, while two wings were attached to his shoulder blades. He was going to question Fairy Lilac about this change, but she, having already mounted her swallow, said to him:

"Follow me to the Fairy Palace in the clouds; there we can speak without being heard."

A few minutes later they arrived at the Palace and were at once admitted to the presence of the Fairy Queen. Fairy Lilac hastened to inform the Queen of what had happened, and to ask her advice as to what was best to do. The Queen replied:

"The only thing the Prince can do is to go to the sun and obtain from the Fairy Emperor of Day a ray of light with which to touch the princess' eyes, and with it return to them their lost sight."

"Go to the sun!" cried Prince Ali in surprise, "how can I since they say that the sun is but one mass of fire?"

"I will explain to you how this can be done. Long ago, the Sun and the Moon were married, but after they had fourteen children, seven girls and seven boys, they decided to separate. The Fairy Emperor of Day kept his seven daughters with him, while the Fairy Queen of Night took her seven sons. Though they have separated they are still very good friends, and they still visit each other to see the progress their children are

making. My plan is that you are to go to the Queen of Night and tell her of your troubles, saying that I sent you to her, that she might aid you. Next time she visits her husband, she will take you with her and you can then ask the Emperor of Day for a ray of light, that alone will cure the blind princess."

"Let me go immediately, dear Fairy Queen!" cried Prince Ali; "tell me how I can reach the moon."

"Do not be in such a hurry, dear prince, for you must wait until night, that I can make the cloud on which the Palace is situated, to float close to the moon, so that you will not have far to fly."

The rest of the day was passed in giving Prince Ali the needed instructions for what he must do during his dangerous voyage. When night came, the Fairy Queen had the cloud pass close to the moon and Prince Ali, still as a White Spirit, bade good-bye to the Fairy Queen, and set out on his journey.

As he neared the moon, he felt a sudden chill seize him, and this increased to such a point that when at last he alighted on the moon's frozen surface his teeth were chattering from the intensity of the cold. As he shook and shivered, he began to wonder how any one, even fairies, could live in such a terrible climate. As he was making these reflections he saw advancing toward him a beautiful boy, dressed in woven moonlight. The boy coming up to him raised his hat politely, saying:

"Welcome, stranger, to my noble mother's kingdom; I am her first son, and am called King

France, for I represent the brave and refined French nation."

"I am glad to meet you, King France," replied Prince Ali, "but I would consider it a favor if you would kindly lead me to your noble mother, whose aid and protection I have come to invoke."

"Follow me, I will lead the way," said King France; then noticing how his guest trembled, he took from around his neck a small horn-of-plenty, some of the contents of which he spilled over Prince Ali, explaining as he did so:

"Our climate is so very cold that my noble father, the Sun, has furnished each of us with an inexhaustible horn-of-plenty, which is filled with liquid sunshine, and by spilling a small quantity of this on our bodies before leaving our temperate palaces, we do not feel the cold."

Prince Ali was greatly surprised at the sudden warmth these few drops of liquid sunshine caused him to feel, and feeling much more comfortable he followed King France, who explained to him all the wonders of the planet.

"You see," he said, "the outside of the moon is dead and frozen, and no one, unless bathed in liquid sunshine could endure the terrible cold; but you will soon see that the inside of the moon is quite different."

"The inside," cried Prince Ali; "why, how can you reach the inside of the moon?"

"That you will soon see, for neither my mother nor my brothers live on this frozen globe; our gardens and palaces are beneath this dead exterior."

Prince Ali gazed at his companion in wonder and admiration, for young King France had a

most beautiful face; his language was polite and respectful; his manners were both gay and dignified. After walking for some time over the hard ice which composes the surface of the moon, they arrived at three tall conical mountains, which stood in the center of long, rocky ranges of hills.

King France paused before one of these mountains, and Prince Ali noticed that there was a large double door in the center. His guide paused before it, and drawing his sword, raised it three times above his head, touched the door twice, pointed to the ground once, then said:

"Snilloc."

The huge door opened wide and a breath of warm perfumed air came to Prince Ali as he stepped in the opening, followed by King France, who said:

"Kcol-nus," and the door closed itself.

Prince Ali looked about him and uttered a cry of surprise and admiration, for he now found himself in the most beautiful garden he had ever seen. It was both beautiful and surprising, for the leaves of the trees and plants were not green as they are on earth, but of a shining silver tint, while the flowers were all white and sprinkled with diamond dust. The ground, instead of being brown like ours, was composed of silver and powdered diamonds. Now as they came up to the immense palace, where lived the Queen of Night, Prince Ali discovered that it was built of moonstone. All this was lighted by a strange white light which resembled that of the moon, yet was a hundred times stronger and brighter.

King France led the way to the palace. On the road they met with another boy so exactly

like King France, and dressed the same, that Prince Ali began to wonder which of the two had been his guide. King France paused and said:

"Prince Ali, this is my brother, King Russia, and he stands for the great and noble Russian nation. He is my favorite brother, and we so love each other that we never quarrel."

At that moment the palace door was opened and three other boys, exactly like the other two, came out arm-in-arm; King France smiled as he saw them and exchanging a meaning look with King Russia, he said to Prince Ali:

"Here are three other of my brothers, and I am sorry to note that their character and ours cannot agree; we are always quarreling, while sometimes we fight. They have united, because as I grew older and stronger they began to fear my strength."

Turning to his brothers, he said with his usual winning smile:

"Come, brothers, let us forget our quarrel in the welcoming of this stranger from the earth. Prince Ali, my brother King Germany, who stands for the enlightened German nation. This is King Italy and he represents the dreamy and musical Italy, and this one is my haughty brother, King Austria, who ably represents the Austro-Hungarian monarchy."

The three kings bowed very politely to Prince Ali, then after addressing a few cold words to their brothers, walked on. King France and his brother, King Russia, exchanged another meaning glance, then they led the way into the hall, followed by Prince Ali, to whom all this was so new and surprising. King France had just sent



The Moon Dwarf announced the arrival of Prince Ali to the Queen of Night.

a small dwarf to warn his mother of the presence of the stranger from earth, when the door of the palace was thrown violently open and the last two of King France's brothers entered. They were fighting furiously. King France smiled as he saw them, then he said to Prince Ali:

"These are two other of my brothers: King America, who represents the liberty-loving and inventive Americans, while the other is King Spain, who stands for religious Spain. Some time ago, my noble mother, Queen of Night, gave to King Spain a new toy, a pretty gem-like island called Cuba. He enjoyed playing with it, but one day it ceased to please him and he began to destroy it. This angered King America, who loves liberty and hates injustice. It was from this that their quarrel began, and as you see they are now fighting it out."

At that moment the dwarf sent by King France returned, saying:

"Her noble Majesty, Queen of Night, sends her compliments to the stranger, who is now her guest, and says that she would be pleased to see him in the reception hall."

The dwarf bowed, his round flat face broadened by a smile as he looked at the prince. King France now said, addressing both his brother and Prince Ali:

"Come, the great and noble Queen of Night is waiting for us. Let us hasten to her. I will lead the way."

They walked on through several beautiful and richly decorated parlors, each more beautiful and rich than the other. At last they paused before a large door guarded by two dwarfs in

floating white garments. When they saw the two kings, they bowed humbly, and opening wide the door let them and Prince Ali enter.

The walls, floor and ceiling of the room were of moonstone, inlaid with diamonds and pearls, while the chairs and throne on which the Queen was seated were of silver.

The Queen of Night wore a long floating dress of woven moonlight fringed with silver and embroidered with pearls and diamonds. Her face was so luminous that it dazzled one to look at her, while her long shining hair, of silvery white, resembled fine threads of silver. She wore a crown composed of seven colors of precious stones such as are only mined in the sun. This crown was her husband's farewell gift, when they had decided to separate. The colors of the gems were red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet, all placed in a rich gold setting.

The Queen of Night rose to greet her guest, then offering him a seat by her side, said:

"I am glad to meet you since my son has told me that you were sent here by the Fairy Queen of earth, whom I made immortal three hundred thousand years ago, by giving her some moon-dew. How is she prospering?"

Prince Ali told the Queen of Night all he knew about the Fairy Queen, of all the good she and her subjects were doing and how they sought to undo the harm done by the bad fairies.

"The bad fairies?" asked the Queen of Night in wonder. "I did not know there existed any bad fairies on earth."

Prince Ali then explained how the queen had sought to punish some of the fairies under her

care, and how angered by this they had, with the aid of the Genii of the Branch, stole away the Gold Laurel Branch, and now made use of it to work harm on trusting mortals. And to prove what he said, he related to the Queen of Night the harm the bad fairies had worked on himself and his dear Princess Blanche. Then in terms full of emotion, he implored the Queen to aid him to reach the Sun, that he might obtain from the Emperor of Day a ray of light with which to return to the blind princess her lost sight.

The Queen of Night rose with an angry frown upon her brow. Turning to Prince Ali, she said:

"I will do more than to aid you to reach the Sun, for I will send to the good fairies the means to recover their lost Laurel Branch." Then to her son she said: "Come, though it is somewhat early in the season for me to visit your royal father, I will go to-morrow. You, King Russia, see that your brothers are ready by noon to-morrow, and that my seven star-horses are harnessed to the chariot for that hour. As to you, King France, I leave the care of the entertainment of our guest."

The remainder of the day and the night which followed passed very rapidly for Prince Ali, as King France was the gayest and most charming of companions, and all he showed him was so new and wonderful that he had no time to think of any thing else. Once Prince Ali had questioned:

"Have you no other brothers but the ones you introduced to me?"

"No," replied King France, "but I have seven sisters who live with my father in the Sun."

"Your brothers and yourself represent seven great nations; how does it come that none of them chose England after which to be named."

"England is already represented by a near relative of ours who rules over the ocean and who is called King of the Sea. As you know, England's chief strength lies in her navy, so it was the King of the Sea who was chosen to represent her in the court of the fairies."

The time to depart soon arrived and the Queen of Night called her seven sons to her; then she gave to each a beautiful cornucopia, saying as she did so:

"When we reach the sun, the heat will be so intense that we will need some liquid moonlight to cool us. You will find some in the horns-of-plenty which I have just given you."

Then with her sweetest smile she said to the young prince from earth:

"Prince Ali, you will ride with me in my chariot, while my sons will each ride one of the seven star-horses."

After throwing some liquid sunshine over their bodies, they left the palace and soon found themselves on the frozen exterior of the moon. After walking some distance they came to where the chariot waited for them.

It was made from an immense star, in the center of which was a solid silver seat with canopy of white gauze. The Queen of Night and Prince Ali took place on this. The seven star-horses who were to drive the chariot were hitched in a strange manner. Close to the chariot were three star-horses harnessed abreast. On these mounted King Germany, King Italy and King

Austria. Next came two star-horses, and these were taken by King France and King Russia. Before them was a single star-horse which was taken by King Spain, and the last, or leader star-horse, was for King America. The Queen of Night held the silver reins in her hands, and at a given signal the star-horses departed.

After an hour's travel, they came so near the sun that the heat began to become unbearable, and the Queen of Night told her sons and the prince that it was time to make use of the liquid moonlight. They obeyed and immediately felt refreshed. A few minutes later they alighted on the sun and were greeted by the Emperor of Day and his seven daughters, the bright Queens of Light.

After tenderly greeting his wife, the Emperor complimented his sons on their good looks and excellent growth; then offering his arm to the Queen of Night, he bade Prince Ali follow them with the Queens of Light and their brothers.

King Germany offered his arm to Queen Red, who wore an elegant red dress of heavy brocade; King Italy hastened to offer to escort his handsome sister, Queen Orange, whose orange-colored dress fitted to perfection; while King Austria was pleased to note that his favorite sister, Queen Yellow, accepted his arm with pleasure. He was proud of her that day, for her rich, yellow gauze dress became her very much.

There were several angry words between King Spain and his brother, King America, before Spain was allowed to lead his sister, Queen Green, to the palace. She was indeed very charming in her bright green dress; but King America

soon consoled himself by asking Queen Blue to favor him with her company. Her handsome blue faille dress was so elegant in make and in trimming that King America felt justly proud of her taste.

King France now turned to King Russia and said with his usual pleasant smile:

"Come brother, you must choose between Queen Indigo and Queen Violet. They are both charming, and though we are the last, we are by no means the less fortunate ones."

After making some excuses King Russia chose Queen Violet, because in her violet-satin dress she appeared so sweet and modest. When he had thus made his choice King France turned with a low bow to Prince Ali, then said:

"Dear Prince, this is my sister, Queen Indigo, and she I am sure will be delighted to have you for a partner."

"But who will you have, King France?" objected Prince Ali.

"Oh, never mind me, I will walk by your side and explain to you the wonders of my father's Empire."

So they walked on and before long they entered the underground gardens in which was situated the palace. After the doors had been closed the temperature within became as mild and cool as that of a summer night on earth. Prince Ali looked about him and was aghast with wonder and admiration.

The ground was of gold dust. The leaves of the trees and plants were neither green, as on earth, nor of silver as in the moon, but of bright, shining gold, while all the flowers were yellow.

The palace was built of blocks of gold. In the center of the garden was placed the banquet table, and soon they were partaking of the excellent meal the Emperor's dwarfs had prepared in honor of the Queen of Night and her seven sons.

During the meal, the Queen of Night related to her august husband all that Prince Ali had told her about the trouble created by the bad fairies and how he had come to seek a ray of light with which to cure the blind princess.

"Beside helping this young prince," she continued: "I should desire to aid the good fairies to recover the lost Laurel Branch."

"You are right, beloved Queen; so as we finish eating, I will try to think out a plan by which we might both aid this prince and the Fairy Queen."

When the meal was over the Emperor of Day arose, and offering his arm to his wife, said:

"Let us go for a stroll, and as we walk I will tell you my plan for the recovery of the lost Laurel Branch."

They walked away, and when they returned an hour later the Queen's face was beaming with delight. She hastened to Prince Ali, and giving him a hair from the Emperor's head, said:

"My dear Prince, you must be in a hurry to return to earth, so here is the ray of light which will cure Princess Blanche's blindness. I will give you one of my star-horses and it will take you to earth. Are you ready to go?"

"Oh yes, great and noble Queen, for though I admire and respect you very much, my mortal heart longs to return to earth."

"Very well, bid good-bye to my sons and -

daughters; meanwhile I will see that everything is ready for your departure. I will send a sun-dwarf to get you."

She walked away with the Emperor of Day. Prince Ali had just finished bidding good-bye to his new friends when a sun-dwarf in floating yellow garments came to tell him that the Queen of Night was waiting for him and that outside of the garden he would find another dwarf who would lead him to her. He hastened to take his departure. He found a guide outside of the garden and after following him for sometime over the heated surface of the sun, he came up to the Emperor and the Queen. Beside them was a beautiful star-horse. The Queen of Night gave him all the needed instructions, then thanking her and her royal husband for their many kindnesses, he mounted the star-horse and soon felt himself descend to earth with lightning rapidity.

When the shooting-star, or star-horse, as they are called in the moon, touched the earth, Prince Ali discovered that he was in the forest at the very door of Princess Blanche's palace. Before he had time to recover from the shock his sudden descent had given him he saw that the star-horse which had brought him to earth had now turned into a beautiful fairy. The Fairy Queen also was there, with all her court, dressed in their most costly dresses. The new fairy was addressing them and he drew near to hear what was being said:

"My noble mistress, Queen of Night, hearing from the lips of your messenger, Prince Ali, the theft of the Gold Laurel Branch, has sent me to you that I might aid you to recover your lost

property. Before I departed I was given a few drops of the nectar of immortality which is found in the moon and in compliment to her royal husband, the Queen of Night ordered that on touching the earth I would become Fairy Sunflower, and that the flowers for which I stand would follow the sun even on a rainy day."

The Fairy Queen was overjoyed at the thought that she would soon recover her lost Laurel Branch, and she thanked Fairy Sunflower for the aid she had promised to give, then she asked:

"The sunflower is a plant unknown to me; pray tell me of what use it will be to mortals?"

"Before very long, as it is a rapid grower and has many seeds, it will increase in such numbers that it will cease to be an ornament and will soon be termed by lazy mortals a wicked useless weed. Yet it will have its use. Wherever it grows, unless it is pulled out, it will choke all good crops; so to win their daily bread, mortals will be compelled to toil, and in toiling become better and nobler men. Besides, there now exist so many labor-saving machines that the poor man is often out of employment. The fairies, however, can undo much of the harm this will cause by making weeds grow amid the farmer's crops so that he must hire men to pull them out."

"Your reasons are excellent," cried the delighted Fairy Queen, "and I am glad of the birth of the new plant you so sweetly represent. Now, dear Fairy Sunflower, what must I do to recover my Gold Laurel Branch."

Fairy Sunflower turned to Prince Ali, whom

Fairy Lilac had touched with her wand, and had once more turned into a prince, then she said:

"Prince Ali has the Ray of Light with which to restore the sight of the blind Princess. After he has used it for that purpose, he will return it to me and I, having the needed instructions from the Queen of Night, will make use of it for the recovery of the Gold Laurel Branch."

The Fairy Queen, addressing the prince, said:

"Come, Prince Ali, you must be in a hurry to see your dear princess again, so let us hasten to her."

They all entered the palace and found Princess Blanche in the white parlor. She was weeping bitterly. Without saying a word, Prince Ali hastened to her and touched her poor blind eyes with the healing ray of light. An instant later, with a cry of joy Princess Blanche recognized him; she could see again. Her happiness was so great that she almost fainted.

The Fairy Queen smiled, then said:

"Come, my dear children, you have waited long enough, you had better be married immediately."

And they were married that very day, their only guests being the Fairy Queen and her court. After the wedding breakfast, the prince and his wife departed to pay a visit to Ali's sister, the beautiful Bianca, who had married King Alinama II, once known as Demi-King.

The Fairy Queen, with her subjects and the new Fairy Sunflower, now returned to the palace in the clouds that they might consult together how to take from the bad fairies the Gold Laurel Branch.

Meanwhile, in the Vesuvius, a strange scene was taking place. Fairy Nux Vomica had become so useful to the Black Emperor, that fearing she might wish to leave him, he was to-day crowning her as Empress, with as much power as himself.

The other fairies were full of rage, yet as they knew the Fairy Queen would not take them back unless they became better, they dared not rebel, though their breasts were full of jealousy and hate. They suffered much in their pride to think that Nux Vomica became Empress, while they remained simple subjects. Let their suffering serve as a lesson to all those who are tempted to do wrong, for let them remember that pain and misery are the only rewards given to wrong doers. Happiness and content are made but for the good.

THE END.



